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August 1992

Does Namco's *Wings 2—Aces High* for the SNES Fly? Check Out Our Wealth of Game Reviews

Take a Survey of the Latest Driving Games

Top Secrets for the *Terminator 2* Coin-Op

MAPS AND TIPS:
Might & Magic, Part III

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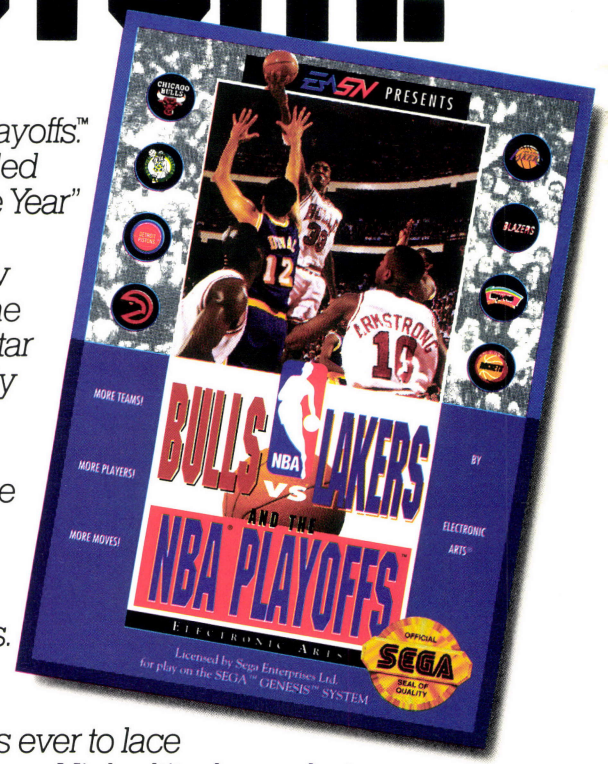
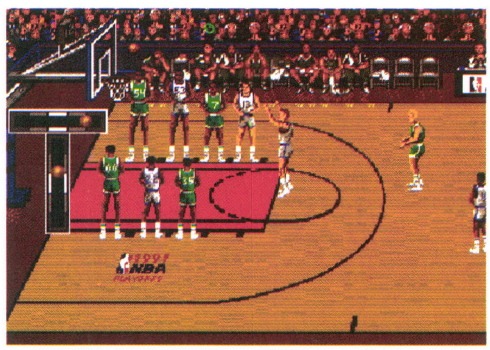
THE GREATEST PLAYOFFS IN NBA HISTORY.



It's showtime. Bulls vs. Lakers & the NBA® Playoffs.™ The new updated version of the game awarded SEGA GENESIS *"Genesis Sports Game of the Year" by Game Player's.*

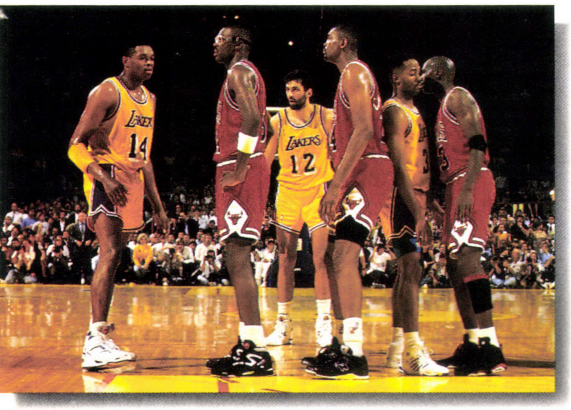
Bulls vs. Lakers raises pro basketball to new heights. With twice as many teams: all 16 of the 1991 NBA playoff contenders plus both All-Star squads. More signature moves and more tasty dunks than a donut shop. Better defensive control and shot blocking. Even the exclusive EASN "T" Meter™ to help you sink those critical free throws.

And, of course, you get to play with the best guys ever to lace up a pair of hightops. High altitude acrobats like Jordan, Drexler, Kemp, and Malone. Dead-eye shooters like Bird and Mullin. Rebounding monsters like Barkley and Hakeem.



Use the EASN "T" Meter to control the power and accuracy of free throws. Sink your shots or sink your team.

NBA · Atlanta Hawks · Golden State Warriors · Chicago Bulls · Boston Celtics · Detroit Pistons · Knicks · Milwaukee Bucks · Seattle SuperSonics

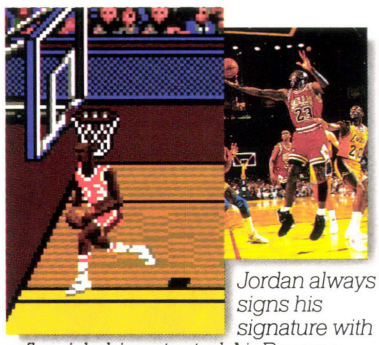


You get the entire cast that staged the most electrifying playoffs in NBA history.

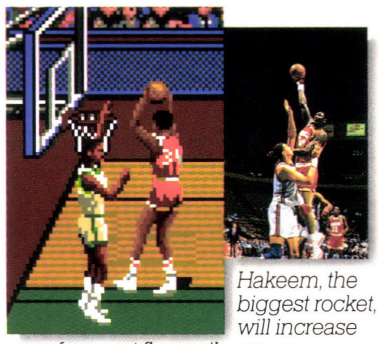
Start with all sixteen teams. From there, the action only gets more intense. Establish your inside game. Hit a few treys. Play tenacious "D." With the right moves and a little luck, you just might advance to the championships.

As you'd expect, EASN covers every bounce of the ball. Capturing every brick that clangs off the rim, every squeal of $159 sneakers on hardwood.

The network's expanded coverage includes instant replays of everything that happens on the court. Timely stats. Scores from other games. Highlights. Even the EASN pre-game and half-time show.

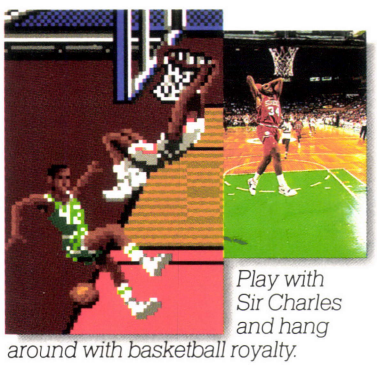


Jordan always signs his signature with a flourish: his patented Air Reverse.

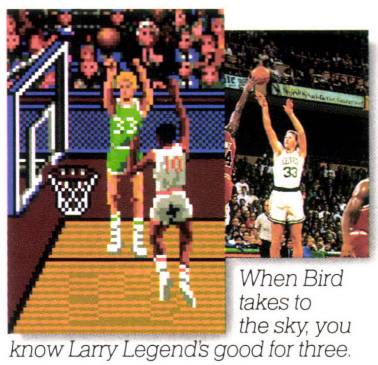


Hakeem, the biggest rocket, will increase your frequent flyer mileage.

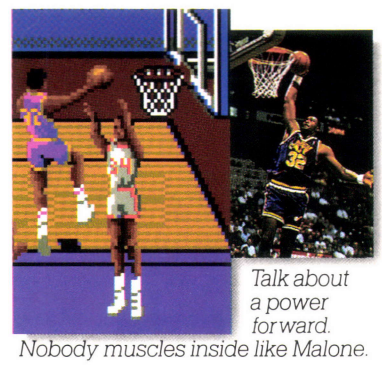
Leave the defense flat-footed with Hardaway's unstoppable UTEP 2-step.



Play with Sir Charles and hang around with basketball royalty.



When Bird takes to the sky, you know Larry Legend's good for three.



Talk about a power forward. Nobody muscles inside like Malone.

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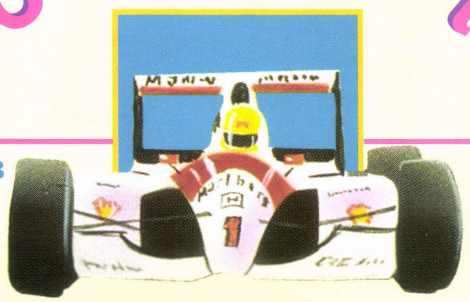
Cover Art: Bernard Custudio



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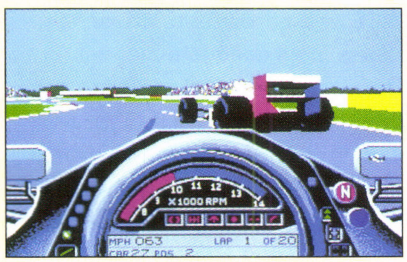

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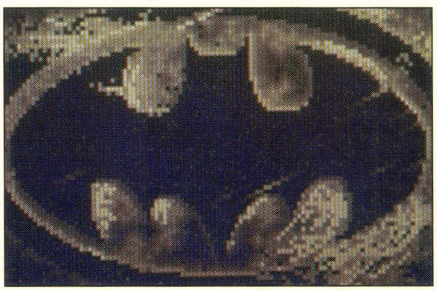

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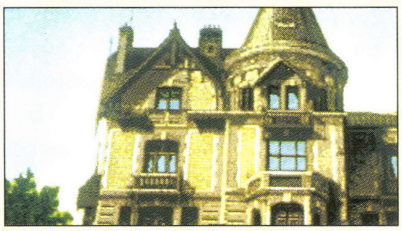

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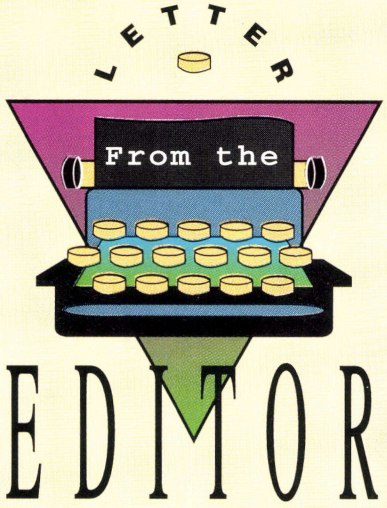
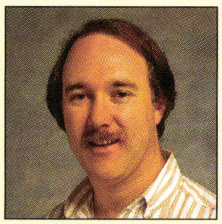


Here we go again, ladies and gentlemen.

VG&CE has been going through a whole batch of changes lately, as detailed in recent installments of this column, and this month announces another bunch. Arnie Katz, Bill Kunkel and Joyce Worley (collectively known in the industry as KKW) are moving on to work on other projects in the industry. There's no doubt about the fact that KKW helped get VG&CE moving during its start in 1988, thanks to their extensive contacts throughout the electronic-entertainment community. They know *everyone*, so it wasn't too long before everyone knew us.



Of course, we've made quite a name for ourselves in nearly four years, and KKW's leaving won't cause us to disappear or diminish our stellar coverage of electronic games. Assisting us in that quest is our new Computer Entertainment Editor, Dave Moskowitz. Dave brings with him vast experience in computer and board gaming, and he'll be coordinating most of our computer-related coverage.

Here are a couple of the other changes you'll be seeing:

• The Game Doctor will be joining KKW, so a new column called *Q&A* will be appearing in his absence. The new column will be handling many of the same queries that the Game Doc did, mainly issues of a technical and historical nature. If you have any questions you would like to have answered, send them to *Q&A*, c/o VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210.

• The *Inside Gaming* column will still be true to its name, but will become a guest editorial column. It will feature opinions on the industry from people within the industry, giving you insight from the people who make the decisions. I think this column will be an exciting and informative addition to the pages of VG&CE.

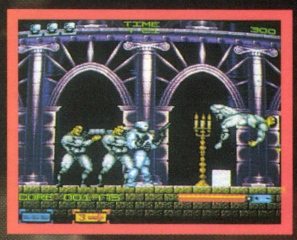
All in all, this would be a good opportunity to thank the people of the electronic-gaming industry for their support throughout the years. I'm sure that these changes to VG&CE will allow us to cover their products in an adequate manner.

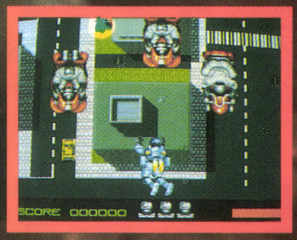
But main thanks go to you, our faithful readers. We do this for you, and we'll continue to give you what you are looking for: solid articles with insight, up-to-date news and reviews that you can rely on. It's a foundation we've built on in the 43 issues we've produced—and we'll constantly move ahead. We have some exciting things planned, and we want VG&CE to keep growing.

As always, if you have any questions, comments or suggestions for us, we'd be happy to read them. Send them to me at VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. And, as always, thanks for reading VG&CE.

—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor

ROBOCOP 3™





OCP is sending in Rehab Officers to clear the streets of Old Detroit, making way for the construction of Delta City. When ROBOCOP sees helpless families forced out of their homes as the bulldozers move in, he joins the resistance movement to battle the Rehabs!

Armed with a new multi-weapon arm attachment containing a large-bore cannon and a smart bomb, plus a gyropack for airborne assault capability, ROBOCOP faces a batallion of ED-209's, tanks, heavy artillery and a new adversary, OTOMO. The odds seem impossible, but remember—you're ROBOCOP!

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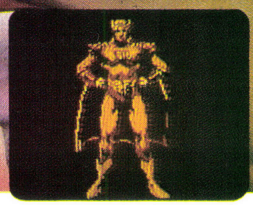
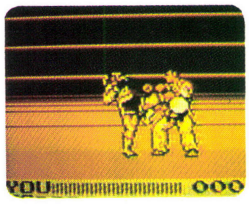


GAME 1

THE HEROES IN STREET FIGHTING GOT TOGETHER IN THE GAME BOY®.

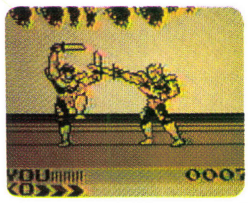
THERE ARE 7 DIFFERENT CONTACT SPORTS TO CHOOSE FROM IN THIS GAME PACK, INCLUDING KUNG-FU, WRESTLING, AND BOXING. CHOOSE YOUR FAVORITE SPORT AND PLAY FOR THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP! BY USING THE GAME LINK FEATURE, YOU CAN ENJOY A VS TOURNAMENT WITH YOUR FRIENDS. FIERCE FIGHTS FOR THE TITLE OF THE STRONGEST IN THE WORLD BEGIN NOW!



GAME 2

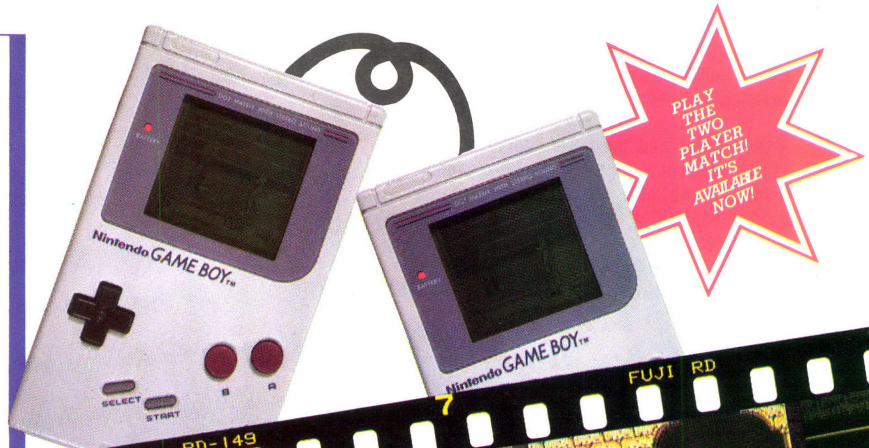
LOTS OF HEROIC ACTION!

BESIDES A FIGHTING SIMULATOR MODE, THERE IS A SCROLL ACTION GAME, TOO. OUR SUPERHERO RICK, FIGHTS AGAINST A MYSTERIOUS ENEMY, THE DARK DRAGON. FIGHT THROUGH THE NUMEROUS FORMIDABLE ENEMIES AND TRAPS AND GET THE LEGENDARY TREASURE BACK FROM EVIL'S HAND.

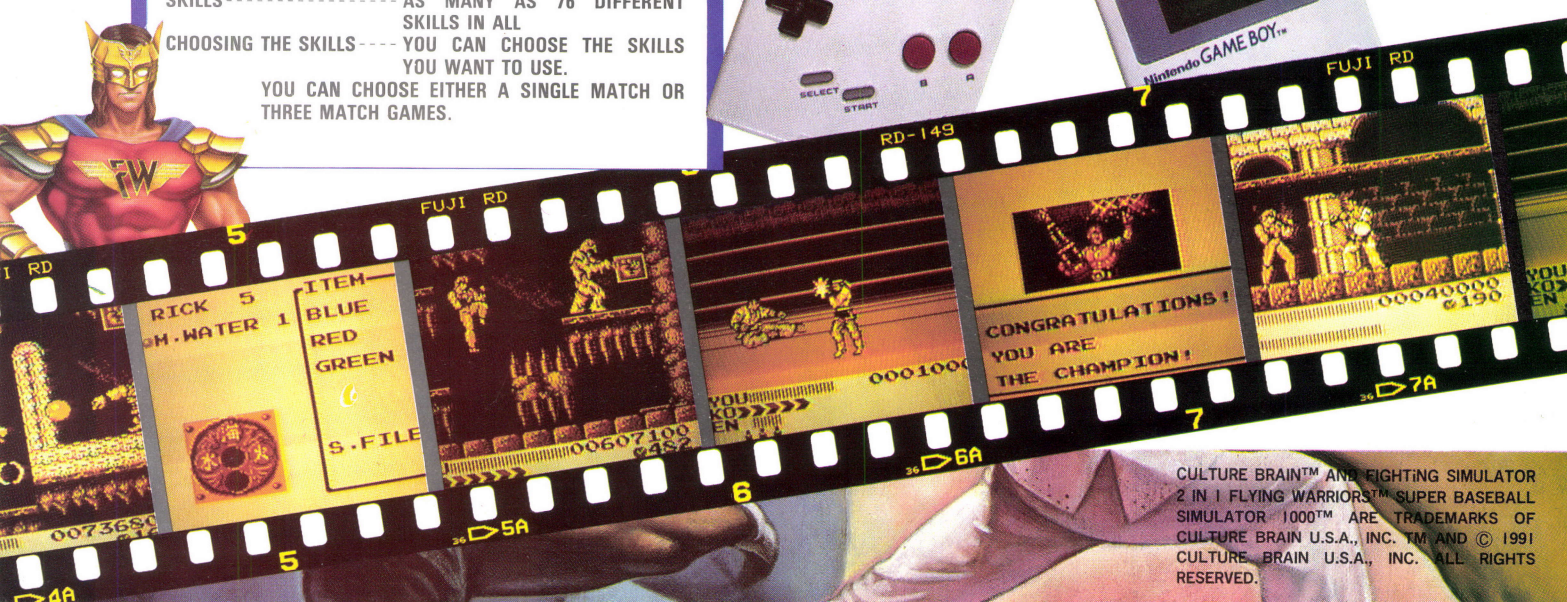


MODE	ACTION MODE, ONE PLAYER MODE, TWO PLAYER MODE
# OF GAME PLAYERS	UP TO TWO PEOPLE
OPERATION LEVELS	STANDARD, MASTER
COMPUTER LEVELS	BEGINNER, MEDIUM, EXPERT
AVAILABLE SPORTS	KUNG-FU, KARATE, KICK BOXING, MARTIAL ARTS, BOXING, WRESTLING, DOUBLE SWORDMANSHIP
CHARACTERS	7 DIFFERENT CHARACTERS TO CHOOSE FROM
SKILLS	AS MANY AS 76 DIFFERENT SKILLS IN ALL
CHOOSING THE SKILLS	YOU CAN CHOOSE THE SKILLS YOU WANT TO USE.

YOU CAN CHOOSE EITHER A SINGLE MATCH OR THREE MATCH GAMES.



PLAY THE TWO PLAYER MATCH! IT'S AVAILABLE NOW!



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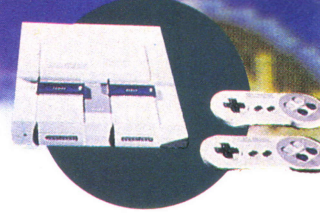


LOOK AT THESE INCREDIBLE FEATURES OF "SUPER BASEBALL SIMULATOR 1000™"!

overall	G, W-L, PCT, GB
team W-L	
team batting stats	G, AVG, HR, RBI, BB, SO, SB, ERR
team pitching stats	G, ERA, W-L, SV, BB, SO, HR, R, CG, SHO

Best 30 Individual Stats

AVG.	AB	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SAC*	ERR	SB

Batting Stats

Pitching Stats

ERA	W	L	SV	CG	SHO	H	HR	R	BB	SO

* SACRIFICE FLY

GAMES	5, 30, 60 AND 165 GAME SEASONS TO CHOOSE FROM.
NUMBER OF PLAYERS	1 - 6 PLAYERS CAN COMPETE YOU CAN LET THE COMPUTER PLAY THE GAME TOO.
INNINGS	1, 3, 5 AND 9 INNINGS TO CHOOSE FROM.
TEAMS	24 TEAMS
BASEBALL PLAYERS	432 PLAYERS IN ALL.
STATS	DURING THE SEASON, THE RANKINGS, W-L, PCT, GB, NUMBERS OF GAMES, AND SCHEDULE CAN BE SEEN AT ANYTIME.
TEAM STATS	THE BATTING STATS ON 8 ITEMS AND PITCHING STATS ON 10 ITEMS.
PLAYER'S STATS	THE BATTING AND PITCHING STATE OF TOP PLAYERS ARE DISPLAYED. THE LIST OF THE BEST 30 PLAYERS OF EACH CATEGORY CAN BE SEEN AS WELL.
STADIUMS	THERE ARE 6 FRANCHISE STADIUMS. YOU CAN ALSO PLAY THE WHOLE SEASON IN ONE STADIUM.
AUTO SETTING	EDIT YOUR ORIGINAL TEAM AND LET THE COMPUTER PLAY.
MANAGER MODE	THE MANAGER CAN SEND SIGNALS TO THE PLAYERS.
FAST PROCESSING	YOU CAN VIEW THE QUICK AUTO GAME RESULT.
EDIT	YOU CAN EDIT THE TEAMS, PITCHERS, AND BATTERS.
FIELDING	YOU CAN CONTROL EACH FIELDER, OR MOVE THEM ALL TOGETHER TO THE RIGHT-LEFT, CLOSE IN, AND FURTHER AWAY.
LEVEL	THERE ARE 3 COMPUTER LEVELS; STANDARD, ADVANCED, AND EXPERT MODES.
CHARACTER OF PITCHERS	EACH PITCHER HAS DIFFERENT CHARACTERISTICS.
TEAM COLOR	YOU CAN CHOOSE THE COLOR OF THE UNIFORMS AND T-SHIRTS.
ULTRA POINTS	YOU CAN SET THE AMOUNT OF ULTRA POINTS BEFORE PLAY.
DISPLAY	THERE IS OPTION OF ON-SCREEN DISPLAY OF WHICH ULTRA PLAYS YOU CAN USE.
ULTRA PLAYS	39 DIFFERENT ULTRA PLAY ABILITIES.
ERRORS	THERE IS AN OPTION OF WHETHER OR NOT TO HAVE ERRORS DURING PLAYS.

FULL EDITING FOR UP TO SIX TEAMS AND 432 PLAYERS!

PLAY BALL WITH YOUR FAVORITE STARS AND HEROES BY MAKING FULL USAGE OF THE PARAMETERS. ENTER TEAM AND PLAYER NAMES, ALL THE IMPORTANT STATS, AND EVEN THE UNIFORM COLOR. INPUT ALL THE CURRENT DATA TO ENJOY A "FRESH" GAME.

A COMPLETE PENNANT RACE

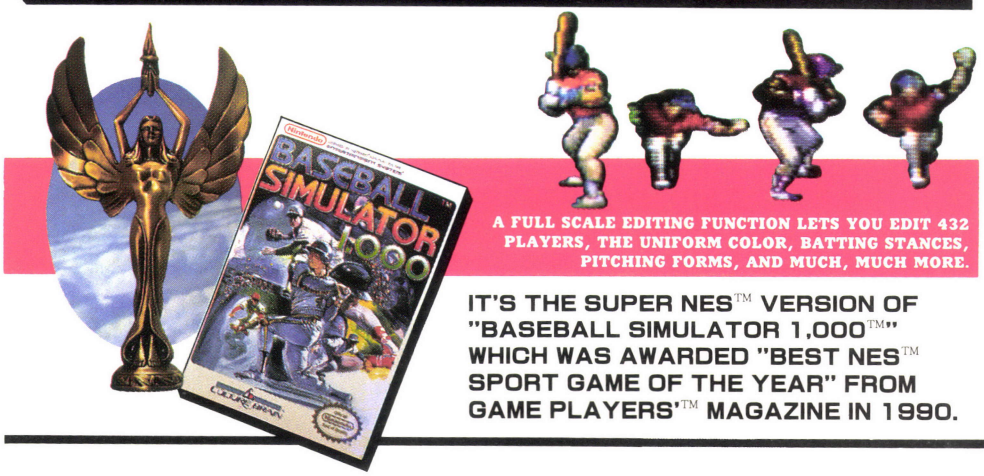
SIMULATE A FULL SEASON BASED ON STATISTICS. UP TO 6 PEOPLE CAN PARTICIPATE. THE SEASON CAN BE PLAYED AUTOMATICALLY, WHILE YOU CAN ENJOY FOLLOWING A TEAM THROUGH ITS GAMES. THE TEAM STANDINGS, GAME SCHEDULE, W-L AND TOP 30 RANKINGS IN BATTING AND PITCHING ARE UPDATED AS WELL AS INDIVIDUAL STATS IN OVER 20 CATEGORIES.

A TOTALLY NEW FEATURE: ACTION MODE VS MANAGER MODE!

CHOOSE YOUR FAVORITE MODE OF THREE: ACTION, COMPUTER, OR MANAGER. ENJOY ACTION WITH YOUR PARTNER, FOLLOWING A TEAM THROUGH ITS GAMES, OR MANAGING A TEAM WITH SIGNALS.

THE HILARIOUS FEATURES OF ULTRA PLAY!

ADD A WHOLE NEW DIMENSION OF FUN TO BASEBALL WITH THE WACKY ULTRA PLAYS. A PITCHER SPLITS INTO FOUR! THE WHOLE BASEBALL FIELD REVOLVES! THE SPEED OF THE BALL GETS UP TO 200 MPH! A FIELDER JUMPS HUNDREDS OF FEET IN THE AIR! THERE ARE 39 DIFFERENT ULTRA PLAYS ALL TOGETHER TO SURPRISE YOU!



A FULL SCALE EDITING FUNCTION LETS YOU EDIT 432 PLAYERS, THE UNIFORM COLOR, BATTING STANCES, PITCHING FORMS, AND MUCH, MUCH MORE.

IT'S THE SUPER NES™ VERSION OF "BASEBALL SIMULATOR 1,000™" WHICH WAS AWARDED "BEST NES™ SPORT GAME OF THE YEAR" FROM GAME PLAYERS'™ MAGAZINE IN 1990.

THE ULTIMATE BASEBALL GAME THAT'S PACKED WITH SO MANY FEATURES, HAS FINALLY ARRIVED!

SEE THE CHART FOR DETAILS!

Nintendo LICENSED BY NINTENDO FOR PLAY ON THE "ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM"

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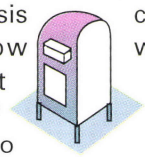
CIRCLE #104 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

NOT HUNTING DINOSAURS

I don't know if it's just me or this world, but I feel healthy competition and criticism in the marketplace is what makes better games and systems. Sure, no one wants to say "this or that is better than the other," but it's a fact in life that all things are not equal, just like there are better cars and movies than others. Being one of the best video-game magazines in the industry, it is one of your responsibilities to say which is best. Currently I own the Genesis, SNES, TG-16 and Turbo Express (I had a Lynx, but got rid of it—Atari was too slow in bringing out games). Out of all the systems I have, I play the Genesis the most, because right now Sega has the best games. But would that make them the best?



Now I'm not writing you to argue about which system is better or which one I like the most. All I'm saying is most magazines, when confronted with the question of which hardware is the best, give the standard answers—"It's not the system but the games" or "Give it time and this system will be worth the money." All of which is true, but it says nothing about having the best system. What most people want to know when buying a more advanced system is the cost and how advanced it is. Better than what? Sure you can say, "This system has better games," and be talking about the Game Boy, which has more games than the Lynx, but the Lynx is graphically better. On the other hand, the TurboExpress has a TV tuner and direct compatibility to the TG-16, which doesn't have the SNES mode but is much slower than the Genesis, which has nothing compared to the Neo•Geo. Confused?

This so-called hardware war wasn't started this year or last year, or with the NES or SMS. It was started a long time ago when somebody made a faster and rounder wheel. Sure, it all depends on the game, but when you're spending X amount of dollars for a new system, you would like to know if the system will still be as advanced a year from now. Lets face it, new computers become obsolete every year. Only by having a hardware war can the consumer see each system for what it really is, and not just buy a system for one or two games to which you give a rating.

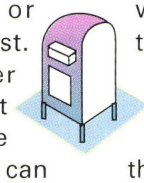
Let me end this by saying you have a great magazine, and this is in no way a put-down. Not only do you do good game reviews, but you stand by them (as shown countless times in your letter column, when certain game companies jumped on you for low game-review marks). I also applaud you for printing both their and your remarks. You also have some of the best in-depth articles on gaming and the history of video games I've ever seen. All I wanted to do was show that it is all right to have healthy competition and criticism, and that you don't have to bash one machine or another to show which is best. It's all right to have a winner and a loser—the loser will just have to try harder—and the hardware war is okay. Things can only get better from this, and it seems it's the only way for the manufacturers to put out more fun and exciting games. Peace.

—James McGuire
Rochester, New York

Thanks for your perspective, James. We understand that hardware wars will continue—we receive a ton of mail on that subject—but it's upsetting to consider how much time and energy is being wasted on it. If you find a game you like, play it. If you can afford more than one system, buy them. However, a decision must be made if you can't afford all of the systems, and that choice is a difficult one. As far as obsolescence goes, it's inevitable that it will happen. It probably won't be too long before the SNES and Genesis systems are outclassed by different models; it's a certainty that there are many companies working on "Super Duper" consoles to replace today's "Super" units. It's human nature to strive to improve on what we have. If we didn't, we'd never have the compact-disc players and microwave ovens we're using these days.

Word to the wise: Don't waste too much time worrying about whether your game system will become a dinosaur; you can be sure it will. In the meantime, enjoy it for what it offers now.

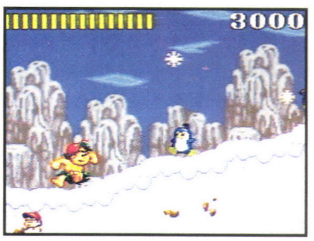
TURBO TICKED OFF

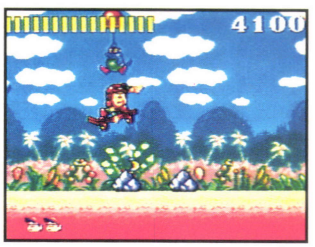


I am currently 18 years old, and I've been playing video games since I was 12. I've owned the Sega Master System, Nintendo Entertainment System and Atari 5200. I've sold these systems over the years and have stepped up to the 16-bit revolution with a TG-16

Letters to be considered for publication should be addressed to: *Reader Mail*, VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Letters may be edited for style, clarity and space considerations. We regret that we cannot respond to all mail received.

The Master of Adventure!





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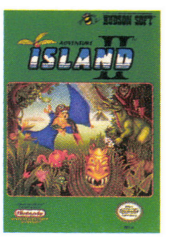
SUPER ADVENTURE ISLAND™

Now available for Super NES, the Nintendo Entertainment System and Game Boy!



Master Higgins is back in his wildest and greatest adventure of all! He leaps into action to defeat an army of guardian animals and monsters that protect the evil wizard, Dark Cloak! Join Master Higgins as he reaches new heights of excitement on his high flying skateboard. Speed through underground caves in a crazy mine car ride! Go from dangerous tropical shores to the belly of a whale - all in search of his final battle with the wicked sorcerer.

- Secret Bonus Rounds restore power and award points to our high jumping hero!
- Terrible traps and gigantic villains await your next move!

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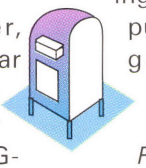
CIRCLE #105 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

and a TG-16 CD-ROM. I've owned my system for three years. I also subscribe to your magazine and, sorry to say, have a bone to pick with you! You seem to be biased against my system. All the time you are printing bad news on my system or giving some good games bad ratings. But even though you occasionally make me mad, you're up there with the top two video-game magazines on my rating scale.

I've got two questions for you. First: Is there going to be *Populous* or *Populous 2* out for the TG-16 in the near future? Second: Will *Dragon's Lair 1* or *2* be introduced for my Super CD in the near future along with any AD&D games?



Please print my letter, although I doubt you will, for fear people might read something bad about your magazine or something good about the TG-16. Please print more on my system, and give the TG-16 a chance to prove itself. You won't be sorry.

—Clint J. Merritts
Hopkins, Michigan

If you've been reading VG&CE *a lot, you know that we aren't afraid to be criticized; in fact, we prefer to put letters in our* Reader Mail *section that deal with issues. It's the only way that we can improve as a source for gaming information. This is your magazine, and we want to make sure you're happy with it.*

As far as us having a bias against th TurboGrafx line, we're sorry to hear you feel that way. We're the only publisher doing a dedicated TurboGrafx-16 magazine, TurboPlay *(see our offer on page 97), and we try to cover as much as we can about the whole video-gaming scene in* VG&CE. *However, in recent months the TG-16 hasn't been very well supported, as it's gone through a transition from NEC to Turbo Technologies Inc. (TTI). We'd like to take this opportunity to say that there is a lot of activity proposed for the TG-16, and that will appear in the pages of* VG&CE. *As Andy Eddy's* Letter From the Editor *this month states, you're going to be seeing some changes, most notably the addition of a video-game preview section, which will help readers out with hints of what will be appearing on their store shelves soon.*

According to the current schedule of games for release on the TurboGrafx-16, there isn't a Dragon's Lair *to be seen. That may change as time goes on, of course.*

CLUB A STREET FIGHTER

Certainly one of the hottest games on the market is none other than the awesome *Street Fighter II.* It has set a new standard in one-on-one brawling games and has caused a lot of publicity for Capcom. In fact, the game is being played almost everywhere. Any arcade I go to now has at least one *Street Fighter II* machine. The most I've seen at one arcade—eight! And now, the *Championship Edition* has been released, and Capcom should have the SNES version out as you read this. What next?

Some friends of mine and myself have banded together to form a Street Fighting Club. People from all over are joining, and we go in groups to play *Street Fighter II* at the local arcade. As well, tips and tactics are constantly being traded, and new maneuvers are being mastered. We plan to have regular tournaments once the home version comes out. The best part is, the more the merrier. If we can get enough people interested—well, who knows what's next?

I know, as well as everyone else, that if you are someone who plays games on a regular basis, then you definitely have played this game at least once, and were hooked from the start. There is no limit to membership, and the cost is *free!* You get information, articles, write-ups, anything we can come up with. We hope to soon hold regular meetings and turn it into a free-for-all, beat-your-next-door-neighbor club. Interested? We hope you are, so just send your name, mailing address, a photo of yourself (if you can) and information about your favorite character, tips and tactics to:

The Champions of the World
c/o Shawn Holmes
615 Hemlock St.
Qualicum Beach, BC
CANADA V9K 1H8

We hope to hear from you soon.

PROUD, BUT...

I have been a proud owner of the Sega Genesis System for about two years now. I was just wondering if the Genesis could use big, detailed characters like the SNES. I have faith that it could, somehow. I have also heard news that the SNES has a 16-meg game called *Street Fighter II.*

I understand that the Genesis has an abundance of great games, and I know its capabilities. On the other hand, I know about its weaknesses; that shouldn't stop them from being number one in the market.

In this competitive race, I believe what Nintendo is trying to do is compensate for its lack of games by coming up with highly advanced games such as *Street Fighter II.* Shouldn't the Genesis create big, detailed characters and/or program a 16-meg cart as well? The largest of any Genesis game so far, I believe, is 12 megs. If Sega wants to overcome the SNES, then it'll have to make a breakthrough. Only when that day comes will the SNES be subdued.

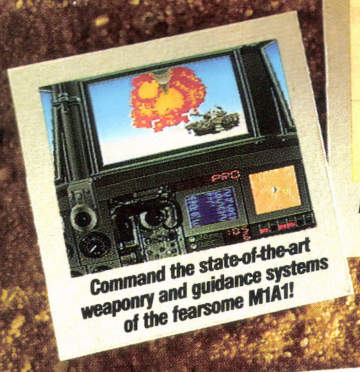
—Tuan Nguyen
San Jose, California

Check out Last Battle *for large Genesis characters. And the upping of the ante will come when Sega and Nintendo bring out their respective CD-ROM units. At that point, you'll see the size of the games crank up to intense proportions, hundreds of times more than you'd be able to fit on a cartridge.*

CORRECTION

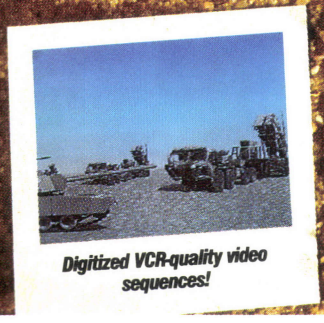
The author of the computer strategy for *4-D Boxing* that appeared in the June 1992 issue was inadvertently misidentified. It was written by John Schneider.

The field reports are in: Super Battletank™ scores a decisive victory!

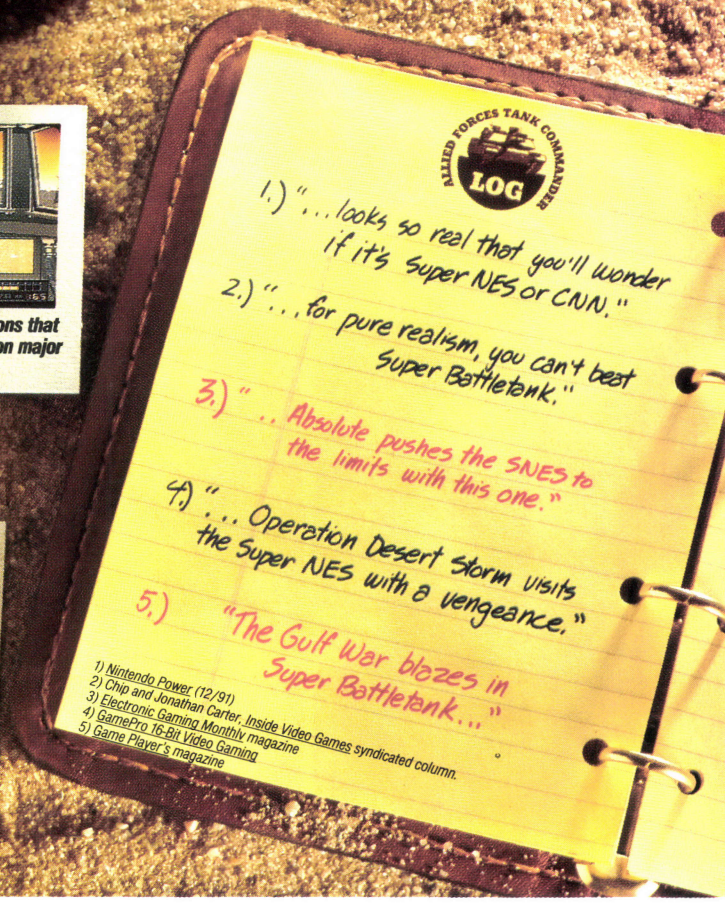

Command the state-of-the-art weaponry and guidance systems of the fearsome M1A1!

Re-create actual Desert Storm maneuvers!

Ten action-packed missions that culminate with assaults on major enemy targets!


Digitized VCR-quality video sequences!

Day and night combat scenarios!



The word from the video-game theater of operations is clear: ***Super Battletank: War in the Gulf*** *performs brilliantly on the Super NES™!*

One of the most realistic, authentic military games ever created, ***Super Battletank*** *puts you, an Allied Forces tank commander, in charge of the devastatingly powerful M1A1 battletank, armored warfare champion of Operation Desert Storm.*

You'll take on enemy tanks, helicopters, and SCUD launchers, and experience searing sound effects and spectacular digitized graphics that will make you feel you're right at the core of the Persian Gulf War!

And coming soon: ***Super Battletank*** *on the Sega™ Genesis™!*

Designed by Garry Kitchen and Alex DeMeo.

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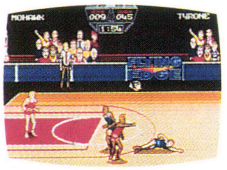
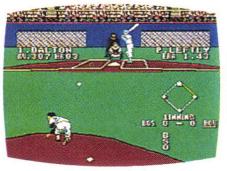
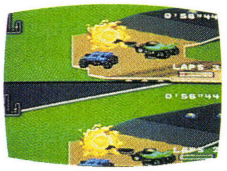
Super Adventure Island

Super Bowl


Arch Rivals

Out Run Europa


Bases Loaded 3


RPM Racing

Kablooey

Bart vs. The Space Mutants

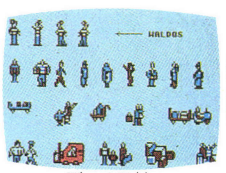
Contra III

Darkwing Duck

Desert Strike

Castlevania IV

Waialae Country Club


Where's Waldo

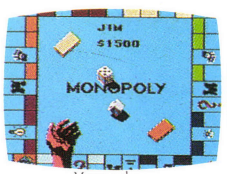
Sesame Street ABC/123

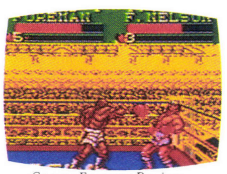
Suddenly, the place with the games everyone wants is Sears.

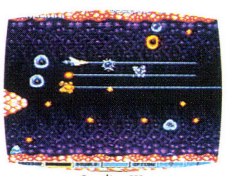
Go figure.

Joe & Mac

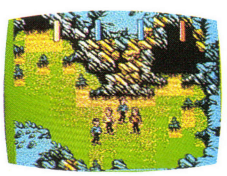
Olympic Gold


Monopoly

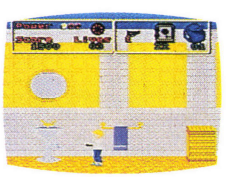

George Foreman Boxing

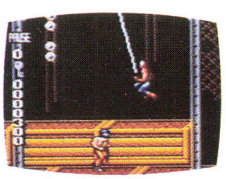

Gradius III

Magic Sword


Star Trek

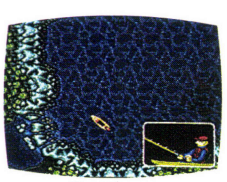
Steel Empire

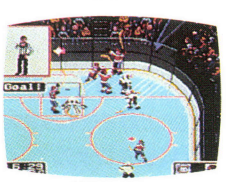

Home Alone

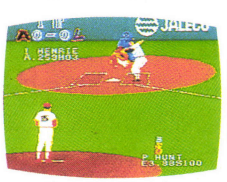

Amazing Spiderman

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III

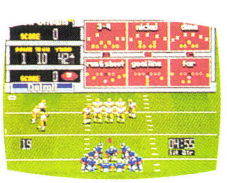
Roundball


King Salmon


NHL Hockey

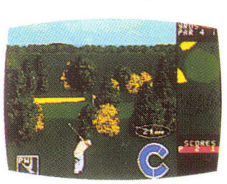

Super Bases Loaded

Act Raiser

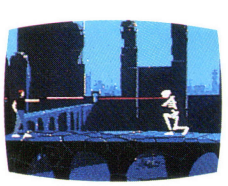

Madden '92

Barbie

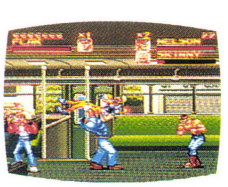
NBA All-Star Challenge 2


Leaderboard Golf

Where in Time is Carmen SanDiego?


Out Of This World

Pit Fighter


Rival Turf

Darius Twin

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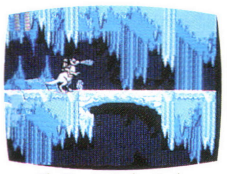
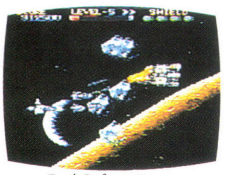
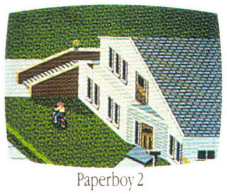
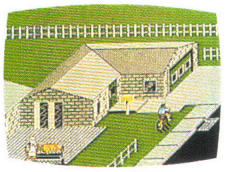

The Empire Strikes Back

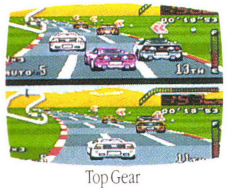

Earth Defense Force


Paperboy 2


Paperboy 2 (NES)

Street Fighter II

Jordan vs. Bird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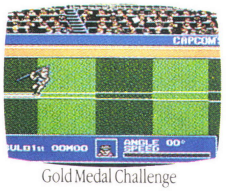
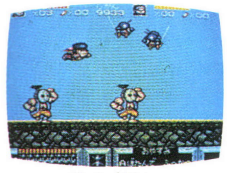
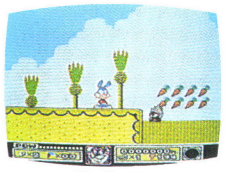

Gold Medal Challenge

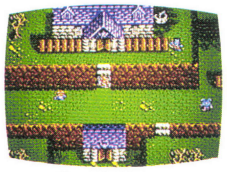

Mystical Ninja

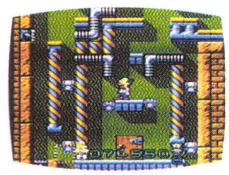
Road Rash

Sesame Street Countdown


Tiny Toons

Jack Nicklaus Golf


Gargoyle's Quest


Krusty's Fun House

Ferrari Grand Prix

Overnight, it seems, there's a place for video games like no other. It's called FunTronics, the new game department at Sears.

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Even the best player has trouble with a game now and again, but where can you turn for help? VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT has designed ***Tip Sheet*** to give you, the reader, answers to questions such as, "How do I defeat the end boss on this level?" or, "I've looked everywhere, but I can't find the blue vase." So if you're having a problem with a game, write to us, and our group of experts will do everything they can to solve it. Send your letters to:

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Suite 300
Beverly Hills, CA 90210
Attn: *Tip Sheet*

TIP SHEET

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SEARS FUNTRONICS

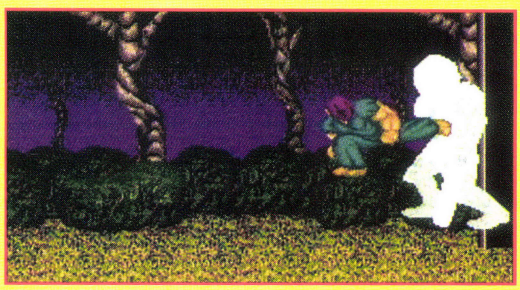
BY
CHRIS BIENIEK

I am a proud Atari Lynx owner and I am puzzled by the *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* game card. I have found all of the musical notes, the scare stone and the staff message, but I can't seem to figure out how to get into the large pyramid. Can you help me?

—Adam Harrell
Centralia, Washington

You can't enter the large pyramid in Egypt 1700 B.C.—it's sealed. If you have collected all 16 musical notes in the first level, you should have received a phone book page that will allow you to travel ahead in time to Egypt 1500 B.C. (Don't forget to take the ankh with you; it's located on the island at the lower-right corner of the map.)

When you reach Egypt 1500 B.C., you'll find that you can't simply cross the bridge to get to the large pyramid, because part of that path is blocked. You'll need to go to the lower-left corner of the map and take the boat over to the large pyramid, which should now be open.



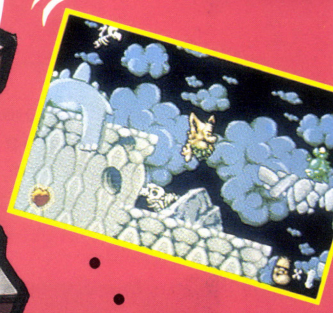
How can I get past the chain saw man in Stage III of NEC's *Splatterhouse* for the TurboGrafx-16? I used the rifle and I still can't kill him.

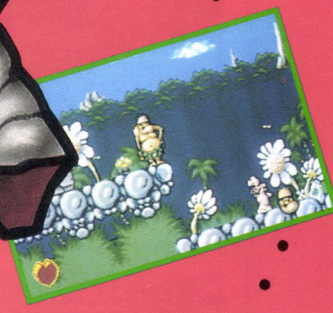
—Sean Riley
Baltimore, Maryland

Biggy Man, the chain-saw wielding end boss of this stage, is extremely tough to beat even if you do have the rifle. First, make sure you reach him with eight bullets left. Shoot him carefully—if you hit him while he's still flashing from your last shot or miss him while he's jumping, you'll be wasting ammo.

*If you hit him with all eight shots, you'll only need to punch or kick him four more times to take him down. Once your gun is used up, move the auto-fire switch above the **II** button to the second-highest position, then hold the **II** button down while you jump at his face. Be aggressive, and soon you'll get to watch Biggy Man disintegrate before your eyes.*

CHUCK ROCK





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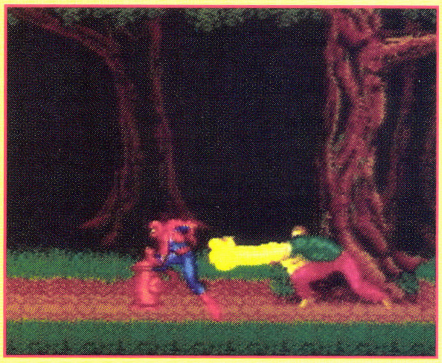
I'm having a problem with Sega's *Spider-Man* for the Genesis. How do you beat the Sandman? I would appreciate any tips.

—Matthew Chan
Sun City, California

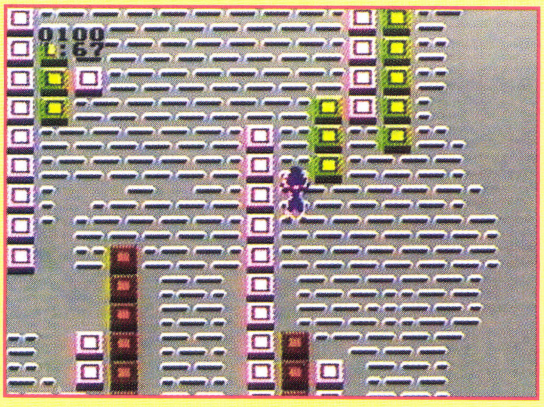
Not a problem, Matthew. As soon as the Sandman pops out of the sandbox at the end of Level 4, turn around and go all the way back to the start of that stage; the Sandman will follow you. When you reach the fire hydrant, just kick it open and the spray of water will mess with the Sandman's molecules and wipe him right out.

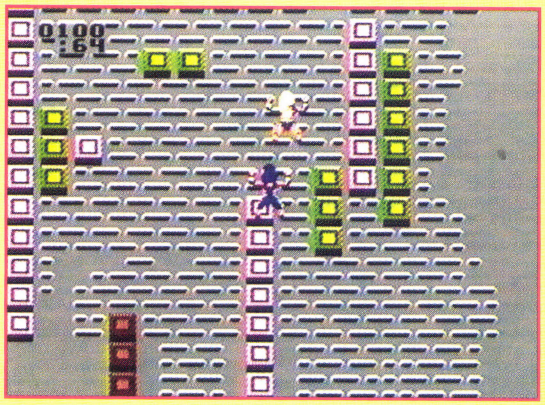


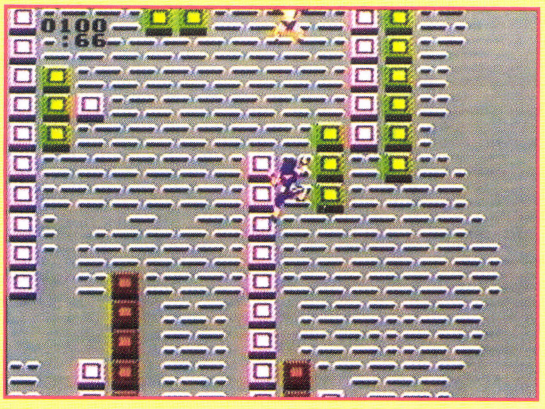
I have a problem with GameTek's *American Gladiators* for the NES. I'm on Level 3, and I can't seem to get past the wall. I can reach the power glove and use it, but soon after that there's a point in the maze where you can't climb any higher because there aren't enough blocks for your hands and feet to hold onto, so you automatically fall off. I have tried many different ways and I can't figure it out. Is there some sort of trick?

—Denise Eckberg
Hickory Hills, Illinois

It's not really a trick, it's just difficult to do. To continue up the wall, you must squeeze through the narrow passage between the pink and green blocks. Wait for Lace to come down from above and fall off the wall before you proceed.







Watch your character carefully with each press of the A and B buttons. Keep pointing the control pad up, but each time one of her arms extends over a colored block, your next move must be at a diagonal to the upper-left or upper-right to get her centered between the rows of blocks before you continue upward. Remember that the lower half of your character's body can go over the colored blocks. As soon as her hands have a grip on the blocks above the passageway, start moving to the left before Lace comes down to jump you again.

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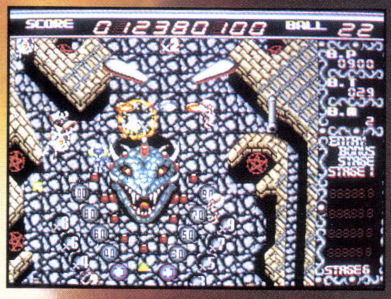

SEGA GENESIS 16-BIT CARTRIDGE

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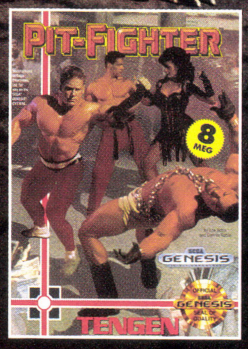

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Super NES and Genesis Get Price Cuts

In separate statements, both Nintendo of America and Sega of America announced price cuts for their 16-bit video-game systems, while promising to continue strong software support for the units.

Nintendo reduced the cost of the Super NES by $30, from $179.95 to $149.95. Peter Main, vice-president of marketing, predicted that the new price, "coupled with great new software and exciting new accessories," will enable the company to expand its leadership position in the 16-bit market.

Sega announced a $20 reduction in suggested retail price, from $149.95 to $129.95, for its 16-bit Genesis system. Tom Kalinske, president of Sega of America, explained: "Due to the high volume of units being sold...we can pass on to the consumer a $20 savings over our previous price."

Sega expects to have over 350 titles available for the Genesis by year's end.

Nintendo Wins Antitrust Suit

Nintendo of America won a favorable verdict in the *Nintendo of America* v. *Atari Corporation* antitrust case, following a nine-week trial that began last February. The jury was unanimous in its decision that Atari had not been harmed by Nintendo's licensing program.

Atari had originally brought the suit in 1989, claiming that Nintendo violated the antitrust laws, and alleging that the Nintendo licensing agreements with game publishers were unreasonable restraints of trade. The jury decided that Nintendo had no intent to monopolize the U.S. home video-game market.

The jury was unable to agree on whether the Nintendo licensing agreement is an unreasonable restraint of trade or whether this program was the way Nintendo acquired a monopoly of power, and the judge declared a mistrial on those two counts.

Sega Pays $43 Million for Color Display Technology

Following a jury decision against the video-game manufacturer on April 10, Sega Enterprises Ltd. has agreed to pay $43 million to inventor Jan Coyle in an out-of-court settlement. Coyle had filed suit claiming he developed technology used in the Sega Genesis to display colors on the video screen. The settlement frees Sega from any future liabilities related to the patent.

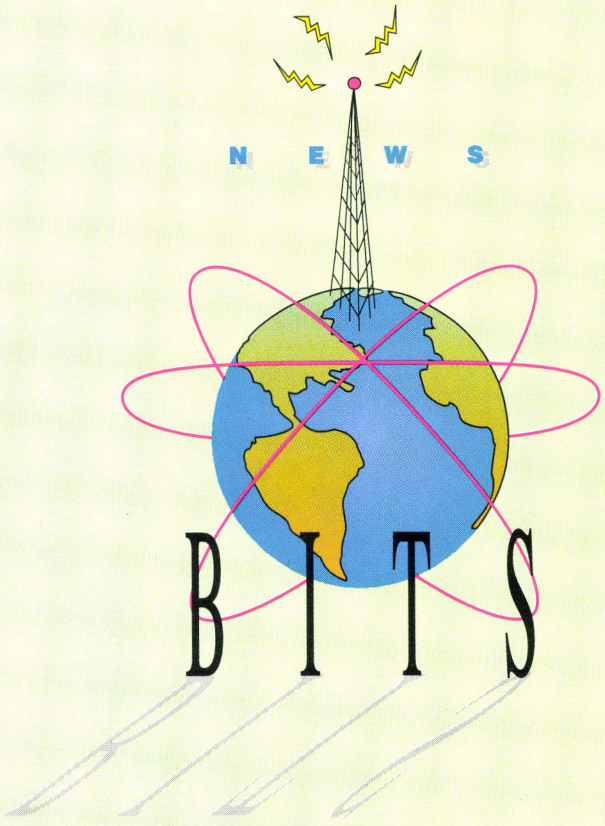
Konami Forms Tech Group, Announces New Games

Konami sneak-peeked its new line of games and announced plans for the upcoming year to key retailers, representatives, distributors and various video-game magazine editors.

Emil Heidkamp, senior vice-president of Konami's Consumer Division, announced the formation of the Konami Technical Institute, in Kobe, Japan. This state-of-the-art development center will focus on future gaming technologies, such as CD-ROM.

The company also unveiled plans to ship a total of 49 new products in 1992 and 1993, including nine Super NES games, ten NES titles, 12 Game Boy and 17 computer software products.

COMPILED BY JOYCE WORLEY

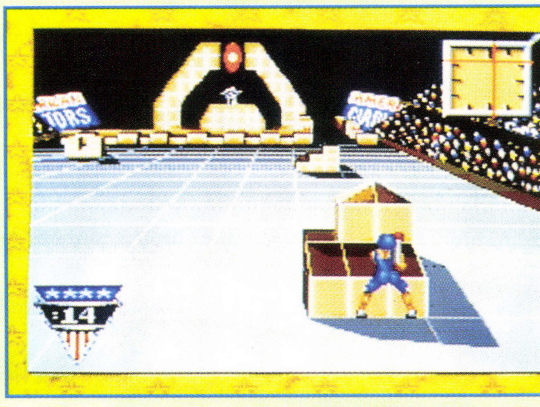


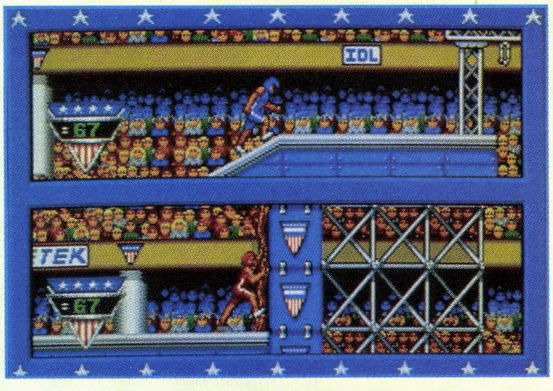
GameTek Sponsors Gladiators Tour

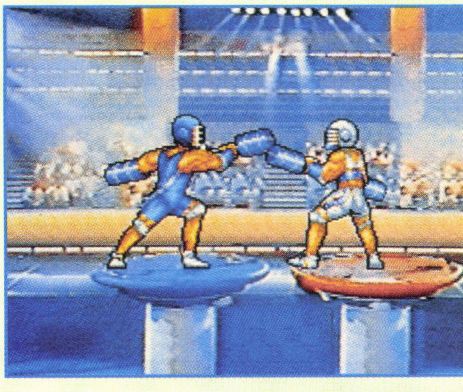
GameTek has announced that the company is one of the sponsors of the American Gladiators' 80-city tour this summer. The stars of the show are traveling around the country in a publicity trip that lets people try out against the Gladiators.

First the competitors go through elimination drills (push-ups, pull-ups and other physically demanding routines), then they're given a chance to try the games and, finally, get to battle against the Gladiators themselves.

GameTek is currently marketing the *American Gladiators* game, available for play on the NES and Super NES video-game systems, and for the Amiga and IBM PC computers. A Genesis version will also be forthcoming later this year.







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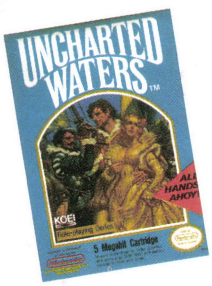
L'Empereur
PC, NES



Uncharted Waters
PC, NES

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New titles scheduled for the Super NES include: *T.M.N.T. IV: Turtles in Time* (August), *Axelay* (September), *Cybenator* (October), *NFL Football* (November), *Batman Returns* (January 1993) and *Tiny Toon Adventures* (February 1993).

Carmen Gets Board

The lively Carmen Sandiego has shown up again, this time in a most unlikely place: Carmen is about to get her own board game. The electronic lady will be de-technologized by University Games, the same company that markets 20 Questions, The Batman Game and a line of Hanna-Barbera products.

The Carmen Sandiego board game will be designed for two to six gamers aged ten and over. It will contain over 900 geography questions and a world map, with each game starting with the heist of some international landmark. Each gamer controls a detective and a member of Carmen's gang, and players are forced to cooperate by sharing information. It will retail for $19.99.

Hopper Is Koopa in Super Mario Bros. Movie

Dennis Hopper has been cast as King Koopa in the upcoming *Super Mario Bros.* movie currently filming in North Carolina. The Nintendo-inspired project also stars Fiona Shaw, Mojo Nixon, Dana Kaminsky and Fisher Stevens.

Absolute Unveils Games, Expands Market

Absolute Entertainment is expanding its market focus. The well-known publisher of Nintendo and Atari video-game carts has announced plans to become a Sega licensee, to publish games for the Sega Genesis and Game Gear.

Four titles will be available in the new formats before year's end. *Garry Kitchen's Super Battletank: War in the Gulf* is modeled after battles in the 1991 conflict; *David Crane's Amazing Tennis* features 3-D, 22 planes of depth, choice of court surfaces and shot selections; and *Toys* is based on the upcoming Robin Williams movie. These are being completed for play on the Genesis, in addition to versions for play on the Super NES. *R.C. Grand Prix*, based on radio-controlled racers, is for play on the Sega Game Gear.

Galoob Issues Game Genie Code Update

The latest update is now available from Galoob for Game Genie users. *Game Genie Code Update, Volume 1, #3* contains codes for over 30 games, including *Arch Rivals, Bill Elliot's NASCAR Challenge, Harlem Globetrotters, G.I. Joe, Ninja Gaiden III, The Simpsons: Bart vs. the Space Mutants, The Simpsons: Bart vs. The World, Ultima: Quest of the Avatar, Wizardry* and many more.

The book is available in many game stores, or may be ordered directly from: Game Genie Update, P. O. Box 5606, Stacy, MN 55079.

Access Readies Top-Level Links

Access Software is readying a version of its *LINKS* golf simulation aimed at users with high-end machines. *LINKS 386 Pro* is said to use true 32-bit coding (as opposed to the 16-bit coding used by older programs). The game was written to be played only on 386 and 486 computers with Super VGA

Tengen Starts Accessory Line

Tengen is introducing a full line of video-game accessories this fall, to be marketed under the well-known Tengen imprint. The new products include joysticks, battery packs, replacement control pads, RF switches, AC adapters, night-lights and cleaning kits. Accessories will be available for Sega's Genesis and Game Gear and Nintendo's NES and Game Boy. Retail prices will range from $6 to $30 for the items.

Ted Hoff, senior vice-president of sales and marketing, explained: "Accessory products offer a tremendous growth opportunity in the video-game business. We are the first software developer to offer a full line of accessories, which we see as a logical extension of our current video-game product line."

New 16-Bit Controllers

Happ Controls Inc. has two new controllers designed especially for use with the new 16-bit video-game systems. The New Competition Pro Super Pad 16 works with the Super NES. It makes use of most of the glamour features, including 8-way superswitch and slow motion, turbo-fire and auto-fire for each button. It also has clearly labeled buttons, a 6½-foot cord and retails for $24.95.

The Competition Pro Genesis Control Pad closely resembles the original Sega controller but has been designed for a better feel, with a flat surface that fits easily into the hand. It has slow motion and individual turbo switches for all three buttons, a 6½-foot cord, labeled buttons, 8-way superswitch and retails for $24.95.

Sierra On-Line Quests for Clay

Sierra On-Line is exploring new techniques, as it reillustrates the *Quest* series. *Quest for Glory I: So You Want to Be a Hero* was re-created using clay models. The Sierra world-builders constructed more than 40 different clay models, and each was reported to take up to six hours to complete. The models were

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CIRCLE #111 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

graphics. Gamers can use over 345 viewing windows, and the game allows users to set up the screen format. All surfaces are textured for additional graphic enhancement.

LINKS 386 Pro will run on computers with a minimum of two megabytes of memory; however, it can make use of over eight megabytes, if available. Some of the new features include a profile from ball to pin, on-line tournaments (on the Computer Sports Network), improved statistics collection, zoomable top view, multiple modes of play and extensive sound support. According to Access, it incorporated all the features that were requested by *LINKS* customers.

LINKS 386 is not a replacement for the original program, but, rather, a line extender for players with top-of-the-line hardware.

Neo•Geo Challenges Notre Dame

Approximately 350 students competed in the Neo•Geo Campus Challenge at the University of Notre Dame's annual AnTostal celebration. The winner of the three-round videogame tournament, Robert Nava, a biology major, took home a Neo•Geo Gold System, and a second game system was awarded to Paul Pearson via a random drawing.

The competition was open to students, staff and faculty members, and started with a five-minute, head-to-head qualifier on *Mutation Nation*. The top 50 gamers advanced to the semifinals on the second day, where they played for ten minutes or three continues (whichever came first) on *Fatal Fury*. On the third day, the top five scorers played *King of the Monsters* and *Robo Army* for ten minutes on each game. Finally, the top two scorers battled it out head-to-head on *Soccer Brawl*.

Holiday Greetings on Computer

It's not too soon to start thinking about holiday greetings, according to the folks at Epyx, who have introduced a new computer aid to make it easy to wish your friends season's greetings, no matter what holiday they're celebrating. *Studio of Greetings!* contains over 800 pieces of clip art, together with a complete greeting card design studio, a supply of paper, envelopes and the *Design Ideas Book* (over 200 pages of great ideas and hints on how to use the program to create cards, announcements, letters and other custom-made products). There's a yearlong guide of holiday ideas for all seasons, to make every occasion more exciting.

Studio of Greetings! is available for IBM and compatibles for $69.95, and it is compatible with *Windows, The New Print Shop, Print Magic* and many other desktop publishing programs.

Williams Introduces New Playfield Design

Williams Electronics Games has a new method of building pinball machines. Dubbed the Pivoting Playfield, it features a slide assembly to raise and lower the field for servicing.

The Pivoting Playfield will be incorporated into all future Williams pinball games. The purpose of this change is to make maintenance easier, so arcade owners will be able to take care of the equipment without disassembling the machine.

The first machine to use the new Pivoting Playfield is *The Getaway: High Speed II*, now available for play in most arcades.

filmed using a variety of lighting angles, and, once on-screen, coloring and touch-up perfected the imaging.

Animation was done as the crew filmed the models, and the animation of the face and eyes was done on-screen.

Suncom Introduces New Joysticks

Suncom Technologies' latest joystick is a double-hitter that works equally well for right- or left-handed players. The Mirage features a fire button

on top and a trigger-finger button for fast response, and it is also outfitted with suction cups for table- or desktop mounting. The Mirage works with IBM and compatible computers and retails for $39.99.

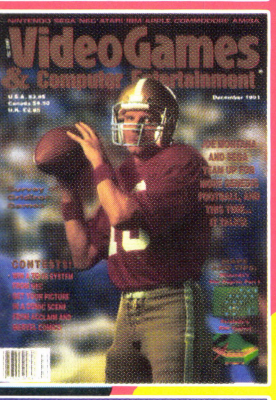
Suncom also announced the Advantage, for IBM and compatibles. A hand-control pad similar to the type of control pad available on many video-game systems, it is, according to the folks at Suncom, specifically designed for video gamers who have graduated to computer

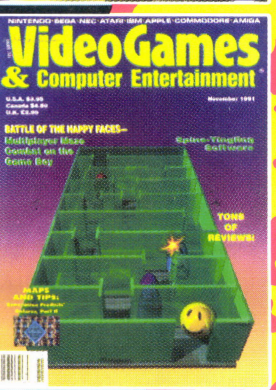
play. It has five fire buttons and a control disk to keep gamers playing, and it is available for $29.99 in most retail outlets.

Flying Mouse

Colorado Spectrum (748 Whalers Way, E-201, Fort Collins, CO 80525; [800] 238-5983) has unveiled a new product to turn any normal mouse into a flyer. The Mouse Yoke clamps onto a table or desk. Then the user slides a regular mouse into the elastic holding strap on top of the unit. The yoke's shaft drives the mouse ball and provides an aircraft-style control that gives directional control for any program.

A spokesman for Colorado Spectrum points out that, although the Mouse Yoke is perfect for flight simula-





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Top Coin-Ops for April 1992

Figures are courtesy of *RePlay* magazine, based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

Best Upright Videos

1. *Terminator 2* by Midway
2. *Sunset Riders* by Konami
3. *Super High Impact* by Midway
4. *Captain America* by Data East
5. *Double Axle* by Taito
6. *Steel Gunner* by Namco
7. *Spider-Man* by Sega
8. *Space Gun* by Taito
9. *S.C.I.* by Taito
10. *Indy Heat* by Leland

Best Deluxe Videos

1. *Steel Talons* by Atari
2. *Final Lap 2* by Namco
3. *Road Riot* by Atari
4. *Race Drivin'* by Atari
5. *Mad Dog McCree* by Betson/Icat
6. *Hard Drivin'* by Atari
7. *Galaxy Force* by Sega
8. *Cisco Heat* by Jaleco
9. *Rad Mobile* by Sega
10. *G-LOC* by Sega

Best Coin-Op Software

1. *Street Fighter II* by Capcom
2. *Fatal Fury* by SNK
3. *Rim Rockin' B-Ball* by Strata
4. *Wrestlefest* by Technos
5. *Mutation Nation* by SNK
6. *Knights of Round* by Capcom
7. *TMNT II* by Konami
8. *Super Baseball 2020* by SNK
9. *Football Frenzy* by SNK
10. *Raiden* by Fabtek

Top IBM PC Games for February 1992

The list of top-selling computer software was compiled by PC Research of Washington, D.C., based on sales data received from Software Etc., Electronics Boutique, Babbages and Waldensoftware.

Top 10 IBM PC Games

1. *Star Trek—25th Anniversary* by Interplay
2. *Civilization* by MicroProse
3. *SimCity* by Maxis
4. *Falcon 3.0* by Spectrum HoloByte
5. *Eye of the Beholder II* by Strategic Simulations Inc.
6. *SimAnt* by Maxis
7. *Secret Weapons: Mission Disk 2* Lucasfilm
8. *Police Quest III* by Sierra On-Line
9. *LINKS* by Access
10. *Leisure Suit Larry V* by Sierra On-Line

Top 10 IBM PC Education Games

1. *Where in the World Is Carmen Sandiego?* by Brøderbund
2. *Where in the USA Is Carmen Sandiego?* by Brøderbund
3. *Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing* by The Software Toolworks
4. *New Math Blaster Plus* by Davidson
5. *Playroom* by Brøderbund
6. *Reader Rabbit 1* by The Learning Company
7. *Reader Rabbit 2* by The Learning Company
8. *Where in Time Is Carmen Sandiego?* by Brøderbund
9. *Treehouse* by Brøderbund
10. *Algeblaster* by Davidson

tions, it also enhances auto driving games and submarine simulations. It retails for $34.95 and requires no extra boards, ports or tools to install.

The company also plans additional products, such as mouse-driven devices with wheel and joystick handles, to be introduced later this year.

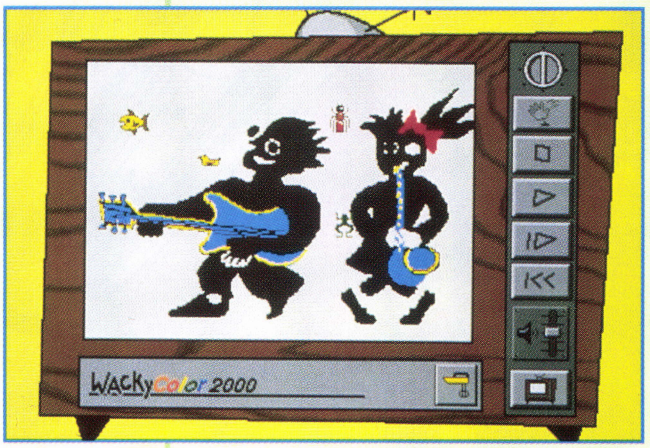
Brøderbund's *Kid Pix Companion* disk has plenty of new artistic utilities, such as SlideShow, ColorMe, DrawMe and more. It sells for $39.95 and requires *Kid Pix* to work.

Space Quest I: The Sarien Encounter (Sierra) has been enhanced for play on the Amiga, with new graphics, soundtrack, special effects and new puzzles. It requires one megabyte of RAM, *Workbench 1.2* or greater, supports Amiga four-voice sound and is hard-disk installable.

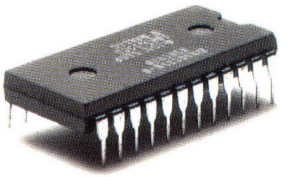
The third *Tour of Duty* disk is ready to expand play of *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe*. (The first was the P-38 Lightning and second was the P-80 Shooting Star.) The third plane in this series is the HE-162 Salamander, and the final disk, due in mid-summer, will be the Do335 Arrow.

Sequels, Add-Ons & Enhancements

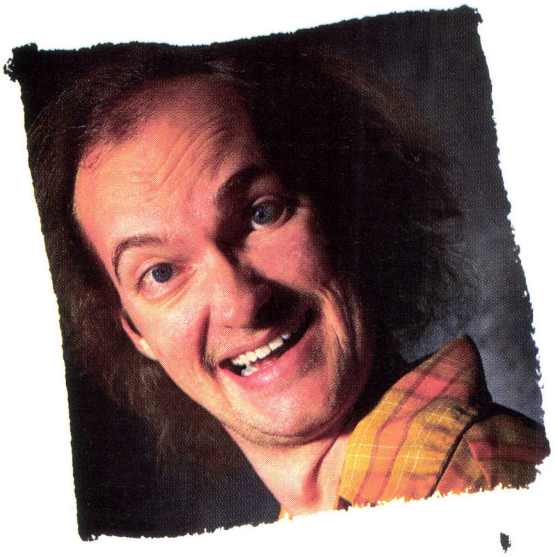
The latest *LINKS* (Access) championship golf course disk is *Troon North*, the desert layout near Phoenix that hosted the Merrill Lynch Shoot-out Championship and the LPGA's Mitsubishi World Pro-Am. It works with *LINKS*, and is the sixth in the series of courses.



Bridge 7.0 (Artworx) is now available for IBM PC and compatibles. Improved graphics, enhanced bidding and play routines, digitized speech, unlimited random deals and many other upgraded features make this program a necessity for bridge players.



THIS OPPONENT IS PROGRAMMED TO BE CHALLENGING.



this one wants to rip your lungs out.

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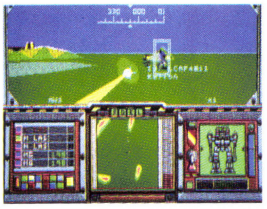

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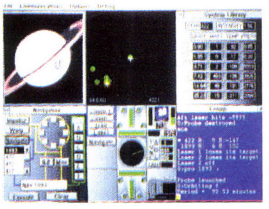

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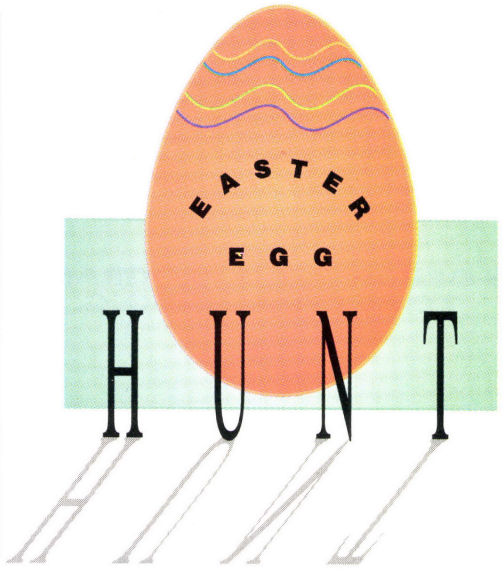
Tips are graded on a scale of one to five joysticks. The more joysticks that are colored in, the more valuable the hint.

Blow the dust off those old games, and try out some of our new hints! If you have some great hints and tips for us, just put them on a piece of paper, and send them to: **VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, ATTN: Easter Egg Hunt.** *The author of each new tip we use will receive $10. Write neatly and be sure to include your name and address!*



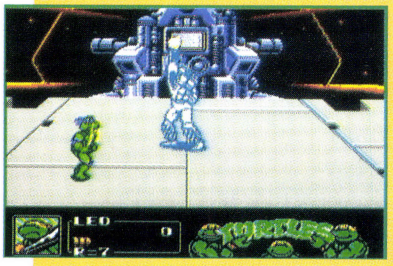
Here's a key to the abbreviations:

U = Up
D = Down
L = Left
R = Right
A = "A" button
B = "B" button
C = "C" button

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III: The Manhattan Project

(KONAMI FOR THE NES)

Steve Rhee of Cypress, California, sent in this code, which brings up a special options menu in the Turtles' third NES adventure. At the title screen, press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, A, B and **START**. You'll be able to choose a starting level, change the difficulty, increase your lives and access a music test. To use the options for a two-player game, just hit **SELECT** before you press **START**.



Shinobi

(SEGA FOR THE GAME GEAR)

At the title screen, hold down button 2 and Up while pressing **START**. You'll be sent to a sound test menu that will allow you to sample the music and effects in this martial-arts adventure.

Star Trek

(KONAMI FOR THE GAME BOY)

If you've played the Game Boy version of *Star Trek*, you know how helpful the "warps" in the space sequences can be. If you're in trouble and can't wait for one of them to open up, just hold down the **SELECT** button and press Left—you'll take a shortcut through hyperspace whenever you need it. You can only use this trick once in each level.

Who Framed Roger Rabbit?

(CAPCOM FOR THE GAME BOY)

Here's a complete list of passwords for this superb Game Boy adventure.

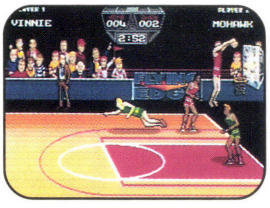
Scene 2—DLT3QYBY
Scene 3—GPLDMSRC
Scene 4—MMCFGWXJ
Scene 5—BGQTVKJP
Scene 6—RTJBWN43

continued on page 30

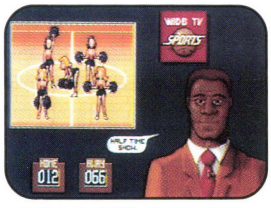
BASKET-BRAWL!

IT'S A SLAM DUNK!

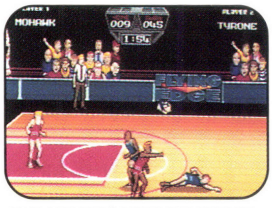
ARCADE ACTION AT HOME!



GET READY FOR AN ALL-OUT BASKET*BRAWL*.



DON'T MISS *THIS* HALF-TIME SHOW.



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CIRCLE #103 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

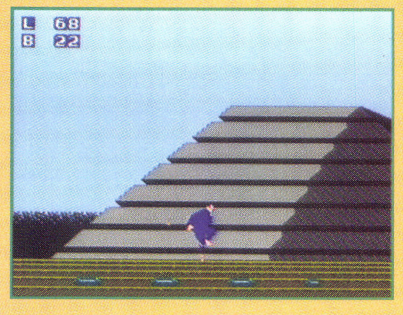
continued from page 28

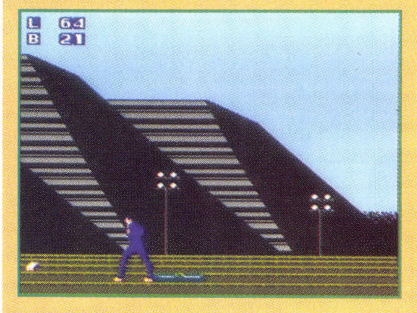
Golgo 13: Top Secret Episode

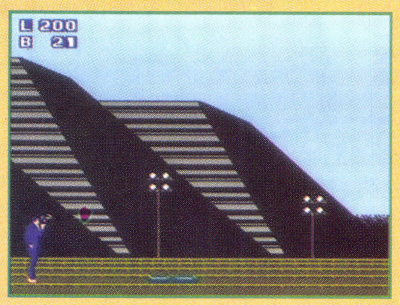
(Vic Tokai for the NES)

Sure, it's an older game—but we discovered something interesting in Act 9 "Apocalypse Now." Unlike passwords or programming "bugs," this is an Easter egg in the purest sense of the term.

At the start of this level, simply jump over one or two of the land mines, then head back to the left. A pack of cigarettes will appear on the ground. Pick them up, and Duke Togo will stop and have a smoke while his life counter is replenished!





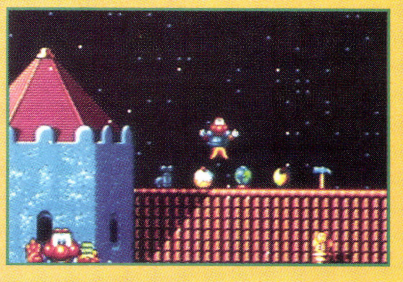


James Pond 2 Codename: Robocod

(Electronic Arts for the Genesis)

One of the sneakiest Easter eggs of all time has been discovered by Juan M. Gonzalez of Inglewood, California. At the very beginning of *Robocod*, there's a ledge with five bonus items waiting to be collected. If you pick them up in a particular order, you'll get a sparkling shield that will protect you from harm! Grab the cake first, then the hammer, the "Earth" (globe), the apple and the "tap" (faucet).

If you look at the first letter of each of these words, you'll see why it's such a clever trick. Great detective work, Juan.



Checkered Flag

(Atari for the Lynx)

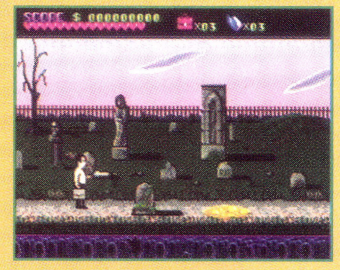
David C. Wang of Santa Clara, California, calls this trick "cruise control." You can do it on any track, but you must select the seven-speed manual transmission to use it.

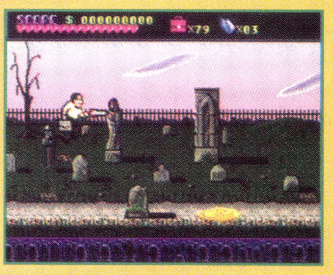
Drive your car up to sixth gear and hold down the A button to keep your speed constant at 179 miles per hour. Shift to seventh gear, then quickly shift back down to sixth gear. If you do it correctly, the speedometer will read 180 m.p.h.—but you'll still be in sixth gear. Now you can let go of the A button, and you will continue to drive at 180 m.p.h. Thanks for the great Easter egg, David.

The Addams Family

(NEC for the TG-16)

In the graveyard at the beginning of the game, you'll hear Gomez say, "Tully, my good man, how about playing a round of golf?" While he's talking, point the control pad as follows: Up, Up, Right, Down, Left, Up. You'll start the game with 79 lives in reserve!





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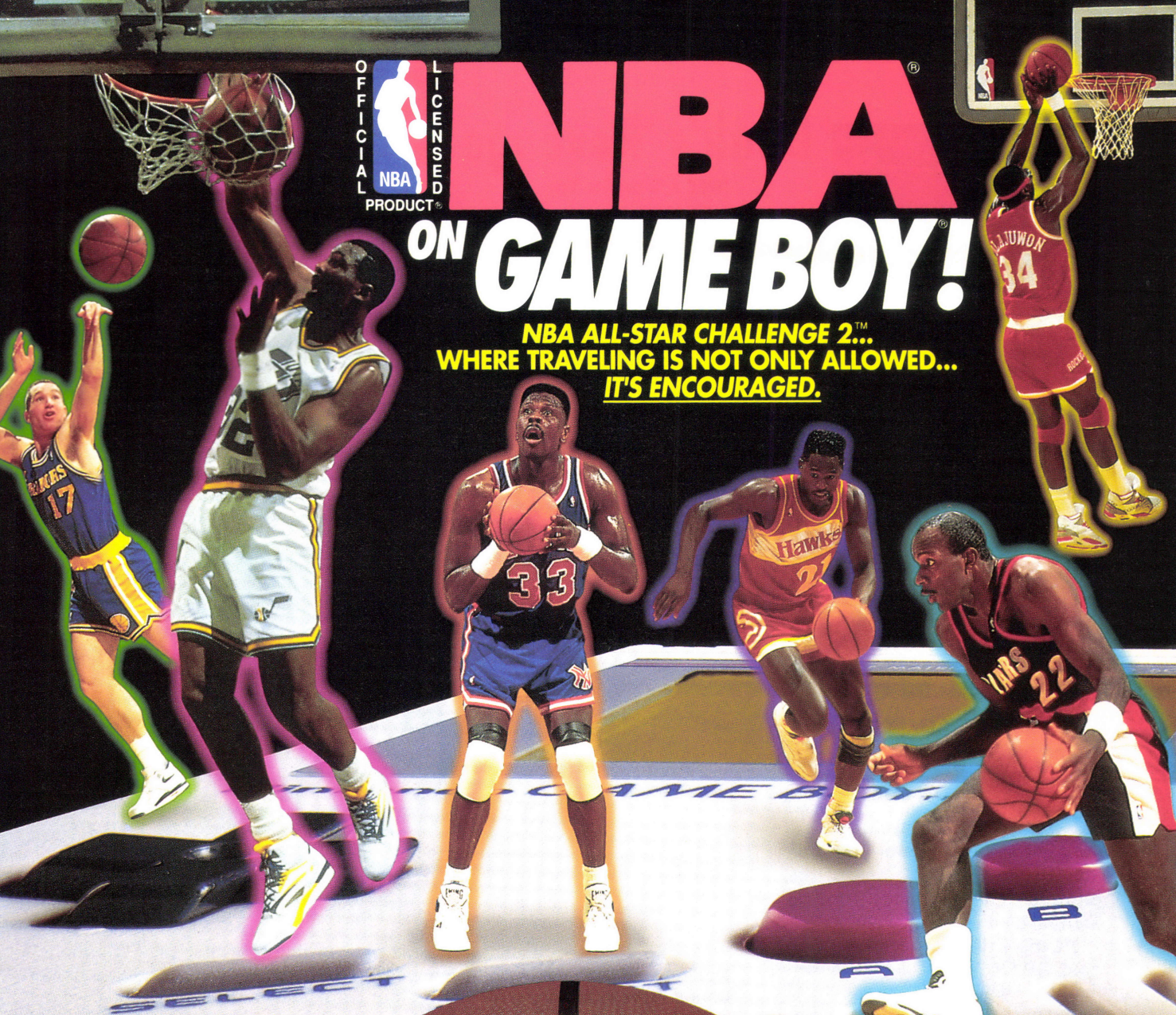

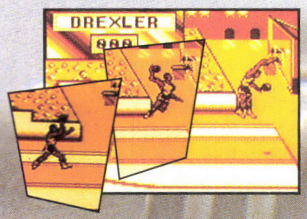

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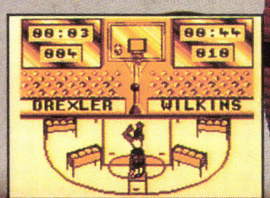
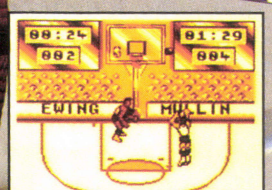
Hit the hardwood with 6 blistering ways to play, including:
• Rock The Rim Slam Dunk • Beat The Clock 3-Point Shoot Out
• Outrageous Over The Shoulder Foul Shooting • One on One
• Accuracy Showdown • NBA All-Star Tournament



BEAT THE CLOCK IN THE EXCITING THREE POINT SHOOTOUT.



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CIRCLE #103 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

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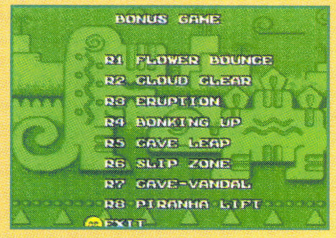

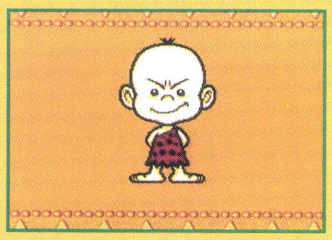

Bonk's Revenge

(NEC FOR THE TG-16)

At the "mode select" screen, hold down button II and press **RUN** to enter a bonus stage-select menu. Move the smiley-face cursor to EXIT, then press II and **RUN** at the same time, and hold both buttons down for a moment. You'll get a sneak preview of part of the game's ending sequence—the computer draws a large picture of Bonk while it plays the "PC Genjin Theme Song."

Valis III

(NEC FOR THE TG-16)

Here's a code that will give you a behind-the-scenes look at this hack-and-slash epic. At the title screen, press II, II, Left, Right, Down, Up and **RUN**. This brings up the "visual debugger" menu, which allows you to watch any of the game's animated intermissions—just choose any act and press the I button. Press II and you'll move to the "extra servis" menu, with a music test and a message test.

Todd's Adventures in Slime World

(ATARI FOR THE LYNX)

Here it is—the long-rumored *Slime World* invincibility code. Follow these steps and you'll be able to plow through any of the game's levels without being harmed by anything.

At the title screen, press and hold **OPTION 2**, then press and hold **OPTION 1**. Point the control pad to the upper right, then release all the buttons at the same time. That's all there is to it, and you can press **OPTION 2** if you want to turn the music back on while you play.

This juicy code was submitted by Jeff Kovach of the Star-Linx bulletin board system, who warns that the invincibility code may cause some bizarre things to happen in multiplayer games. If you own a computer with a modem, you may want to use it to dial up Star-Linx, which specializes in this type of hot-off-the-presses Lynx information. The BBS number is (602) 464-4817. Keep 'em coming, Jeff.

The Addams Family

(OCEAN FOR THE SUPER NES)

After you lose your last life, head over to the door that says "Continue." Don't go through the door—keep walking to the left and you'll enter a hidden bonus room where you can pick up four extra lives.

A.P.B.

(ATARI FOR THE LYNX)

Make your quota by picking up two cones in day one, then hold down the **OPTION 1** and **OPTION 2** buttons while you ride over the "Officer Bob" star—you'll then warp straight to day 99.

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CIRCLE #118 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Wings 2—Aces High

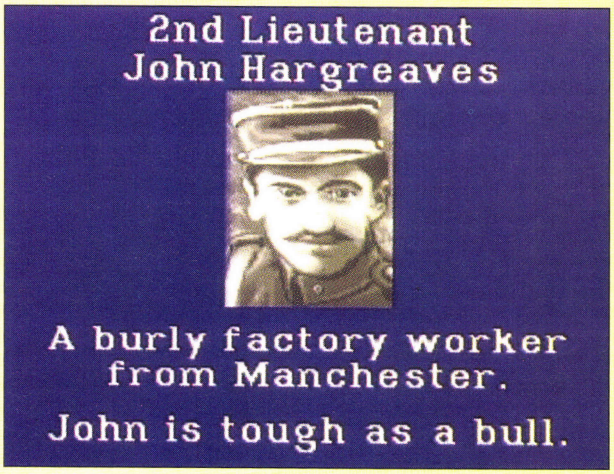
NAMCO

For the Super NES ($54.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

Based on Cinemaware's original computer game that was released for the Amiga back in 1990, Namco's latest entry into the Super NES battlefield is a World War I action dogfight/flight simulator that places you in the cockpit of a vintage aircraft. Excluding *Pilotwings*, this is the first entry into this genre. True, *Pilotwings* is a type of aerial simulator, but its emphasis is not purely on air combat.

Aces High starts off by giving players a choice of five pilots to choose from. Each of the pilots has a different attribute that he excels or specializes in (e.g., Sean Maloney is a wizard at mechanics, while Marcel LeBlanc is an uncanny marksman).

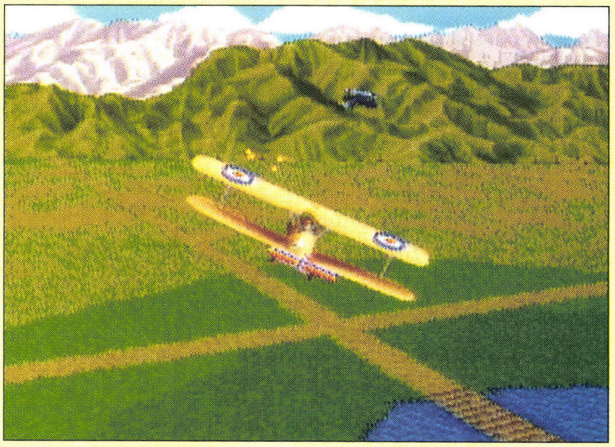


Pilots start off as second lieutenants and work their way through the military ranks. At the end of each mission, you are debriefed and evaluated on your air-combat performance. Depending on that performance, you can be considered for promotion or even decorated for gallantry and valor. There are five medals that a pilot may be awarded: Military Cross, Croix de Guerre, Distinguished Service Order, Legion d'Honneur and the Victoria Cross. Some of the medals may require the pilot to reach a certain rank before he can be awarded the decoration.

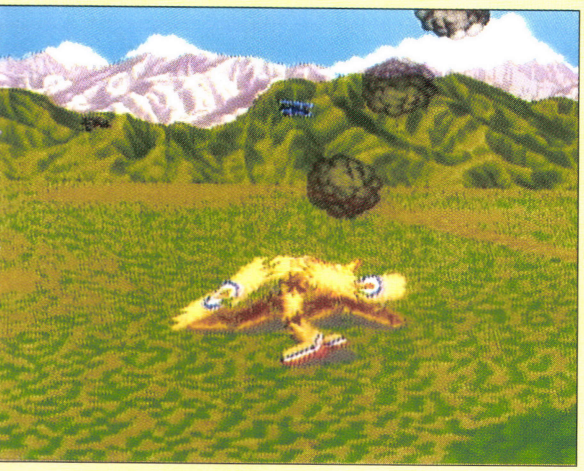
Gamers get to go on three different types of missions: bombing, dogfighting and strafing. Bombing missions require the pilot to study reconnaissance photos of a target, usually a bridge or munitions factory. The pilot must then fly deep into enemy territory, while avoiding antiaircraft flak, and drop the bomb payload onto the designated target. Game play in this scenario is presented in an overhead perspective, showing you the top of your aircraft and the landscape underneath it.

Dogfighting pits the player against one or several enemy planes. In this scenario, game play is presented from a "behind-the-tail" perspective, similar to that found in *Pilotwings* and many computer-game simulations.

Strafing missions send the pilot to intercept a variety of ground targets, such as bunkers, tanks and trains. Of the three types of missions, I found strafing to be the most difficult. Controlling the aircraft while trying to align it with the ground targets, combined with the constant threat of A.A. cannons, proved to be extremely tedious and aggravating. As in the dogfighting missions, the game play is presented from a behind-the-tail perspective.



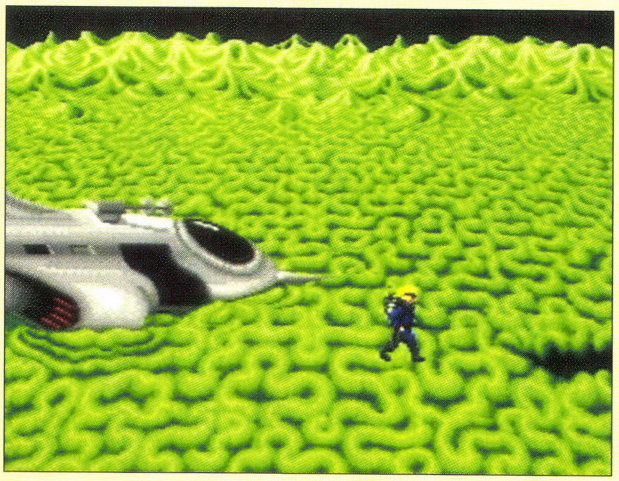
***Wings 2—Aces High*, by Namco, makes somewhat extensive graphic use of the Super NES's Mode 7.**



Wings 2—Aces High offers players a list of five different pilots from which to choose.

It would have been nice if Namco had included a feature that would let the player switch back and forth from the behind-the-tail perspective to a cockpit view. As it is, it becomes difficult at times to tell exactly where you are shooting because of your biplane's position. The other gripe I have is that there is no altimeter. The only way to judge your distance off the ground is by the shadow of the craft.

Aesthetically, *Aces High* is very pleasing. Good use of the Super NES's sound and graphics capability is made. The musical score and sound effects are very appropriate for this type of game. Also, *Aces High* makes somewhat extensive use of the Super NES's Mode 7, though a lack in the variety of new terrain makes the game a bit stale.



Experienced gamers might not find *Aces High* very challenging. The game seems to be geared toward the intermediate game player, but, if you're looking for some great World War I ace fighter-pilot action for the Super NES, then *Wings 2—Aces High* is definitely the cart for you.

—Mike Davila

Namco
3255-1 Scott Blvd., Suite 102
Santa Clara, CA 95054-3013
(406) 496-6371

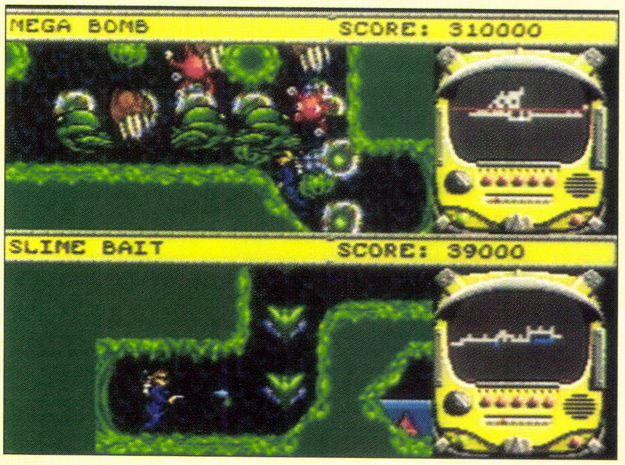
Todd's Adventures in Slime World

RENOVATION
For the Sega Genesis ($49.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Boogers? Did someone say boogers? Holy asteroids! This adventure is going to be grosser than a Saturnian snifflecat with the flu. Poor Todd is facing tons of slime and scores of gooey monsters. Sure, there has been talk about priceless gems. Everyone wants to be rich. But is it really worth it? I mean, can you even imagine getting stuck in a mucus waterfall? Yeecchhh! Good thing the reports have confirmed that the underground chambers of *Slime World* contain water pools, where Todd can scrape off the gook. Lots of neat gadgets, too. Hey, you only live once.

Hope you didn't just finish lunch. With Renovation's Genesis version of this Lynx hit, you'll embark on a sickening journey through the scum-drenched caverns of

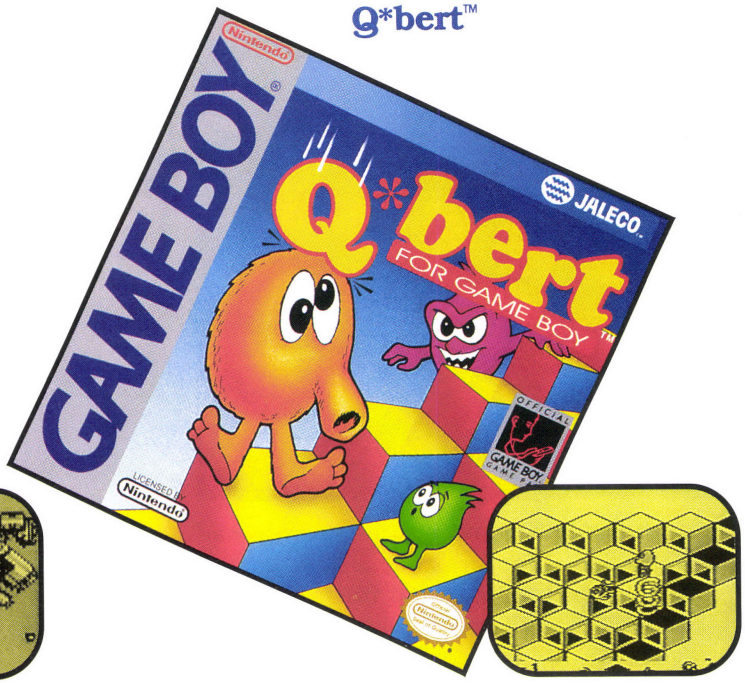


There are six different adventures to choose from in Renovation's *Todd's Adventures in Slime World*, each of which will have you up to your helmet in disgusting gunk and mucky monsters.

continued on page 38

Battle Unit Zeoth™

Q*bert™



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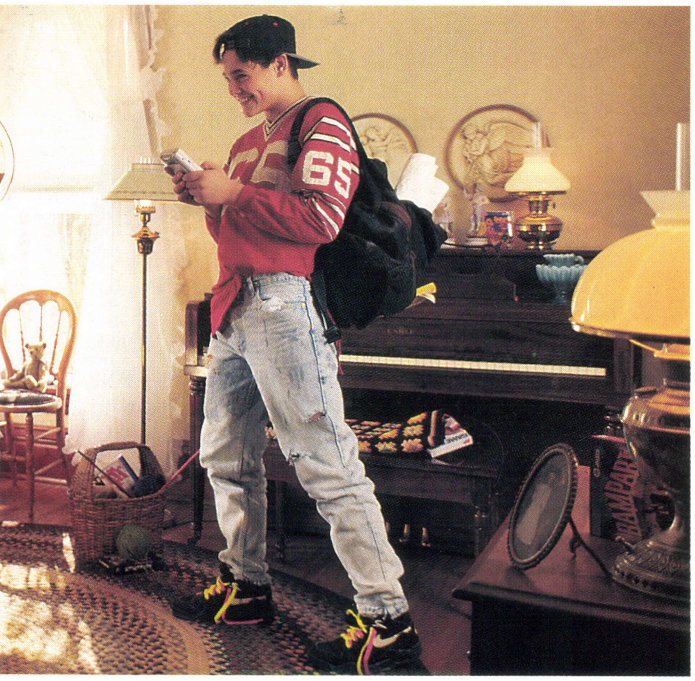

Next time you're faced with endless hours of Aunt Emma in your face, remember to bring your Game Boy and Jaleco games. Don't leave home without them!

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CIRCLE #114 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

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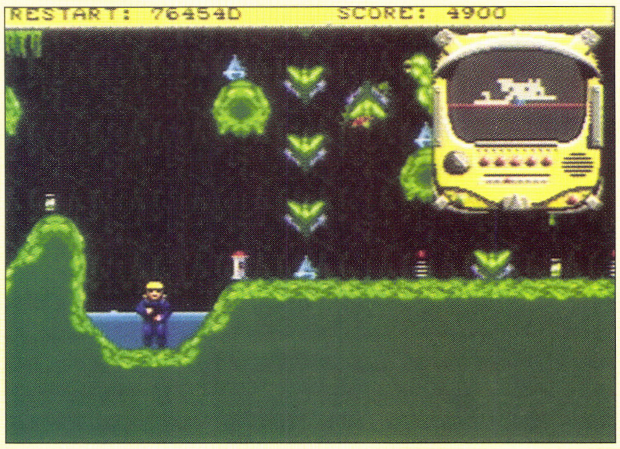
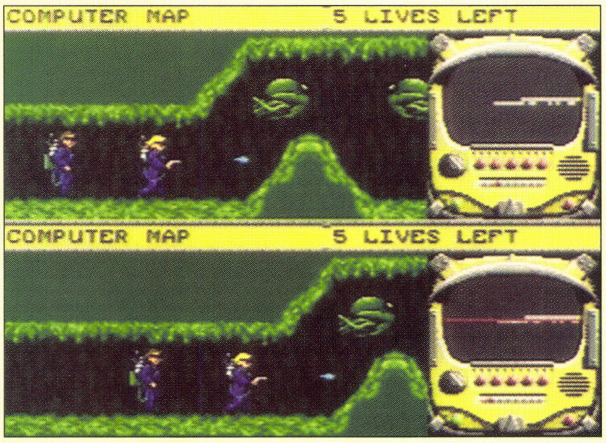


The multitude of game settings and rewards make Todd's battle against boogers, slime and maggots in *Slime World* a very worthwhile trek.

Slime World, and, believe me, you want to do that on an empty stomach.

When you start the game, you can choose from six different adventures (12, if you count the multiplayer games), each with its own goal. On the Easy level, you have unlimited lives, so finding the exit is just a matter of time. In the Exploration level, you still have unlimited lives, but you have to be fast and get to the ship before it leaves without you.



Other levels include Action, which has you blasting scads of creatures; Suspense, in which you must escape Slime World before it melts; Logic, which features tons of puzzle caverns; and Arcade, which forces you to get as far as you can with one life. Regardless of which adventure you choose, you'll be up to your helmet in disgusting gunk and mucky monsters.

Luckily, as you move about Slime World, you'll find many items to help you. These include the gun power-up, which allows your gun to shoot three water streams at once; slime bait, which attracts monsters; the slime shield, which protects you from slime; the mega bomb, which destroys everything in a room; cleanser, which changes a pool of slime into a pool of water; and the jet pack, which lets you fly.

In addition to the special items, you'll find piles of valuable gems, both blue and red. The red gems are especially nice, because they give you lots of points. Moreover, they clean you off, power up your devices and turn on a slime shield.

Of course, there's lots of bad stuff in *Slime World*, too. Boogers, which are formed by exploding monsters, stick to you and must be washed off with water. Red boogers are especially dangerous. If one of these touches you, you're dead, even if you have a slime shield on.

There are monsters, too. Each monster has its own attack pattern, and most of them explode into boogers when shot with your water gun. Some of the monsters you'll run into are snappers, spitters, headsuckers, redeyes, groaches, tapeworms, maggots and octospids.

Slime World's caverns are made of all types of materials. You can walk easily on normal slime, but you'll also need to master slippery, sticky, moving and bouncy slime. Green openings in the walls act as doors to let you pass from one room to another. But there are plenty of secret doors that you can find in the floor or ceiling. Secret doors look just like regular slime, but they pass you into secret rooms and caverns.

Although *Slime World* is disgusting, it's a heap of fun. The graphics are ordinary, making only limited use of the Genesis' extraordinary abilities, but you'll be so busy finding your way through these strange caverns, you'll hardly notice. But man, watch out for those boogers!

—Clayton Walnum

Renovation
987 University Ave., Suite 10
Los Gatos, CA 95030
(408) 395-8375

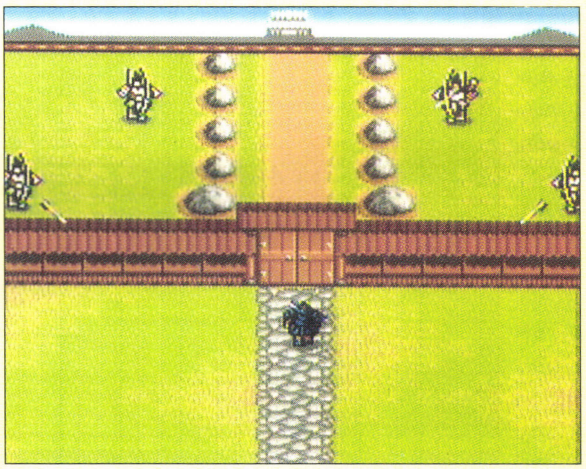
Lords of the Rising Sun

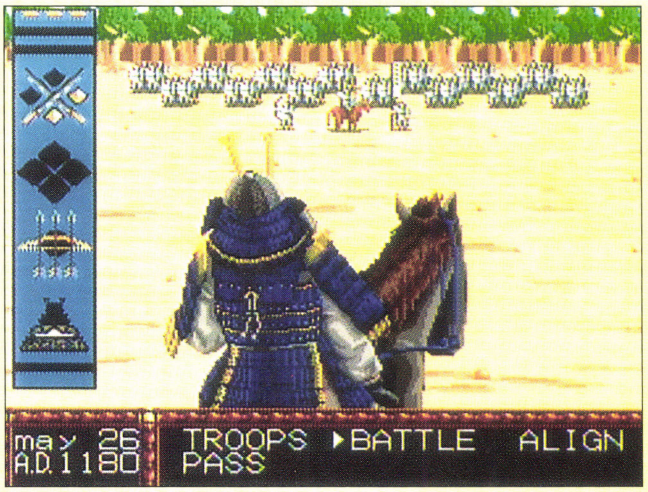
TTI

For the TurboGrafx-16 ($54.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

Picking the bones of the late Cinemaware, Turbo Technologies Inc. has found a wonderfully rich game to bring back to life as its first TurboGrafx-CD release. *Lords of the Rising Sun* is a 12th-century military strategy simulation that brings feudal Japan to life with such historical accuracy and sobriety that it makes the *Ys* series look like a string of *Donkey*





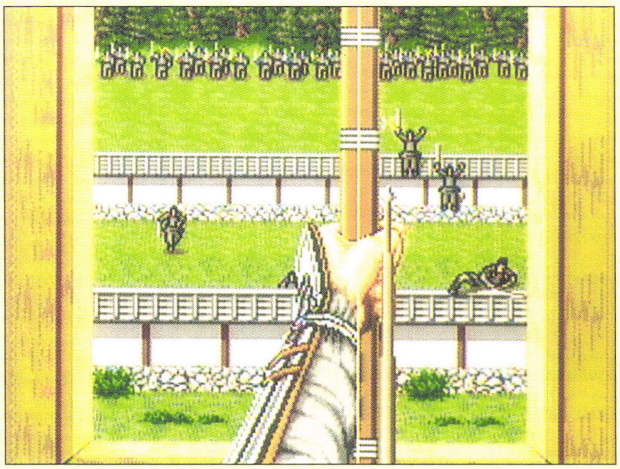
source. Like many CD-ROM titles, there are several scenes in the game where the background music is being generated by the computer's sound chip, not by a laser picking up digital tunes from the spinning disc. The results are surprisingly good, with a number of atmospheric anthems that use the TG-16's stereo capabilities to catch your ear quite nicely.

The narration and voice tracks are also very well done. Certain speech sequences, however, do appear to be slightly "off" from the characters' lip movements on the screen, but the voice actors have tackled a pretty tough job without appearing to be intimidated by the game's subject matter. Of course, I couldn't help wondering how many "takes" were necessary in order for the actors to become comfortable reciting names like "Yoshitsume" and "Minamotono Yoritomo."

Kong sequels. It's actually three games in one; though each one takes place in the same territory during the same time period, the player is given the option to choose from three different warlords, each with varying degrees of power, wisdom and military strength.

With much of the game's action taking place on map and menu screens, the graphics in *Lords of the Rising Sun* range from mediocre to picturesque. Certain intermissions and introductory scenes are beautifully rendered, others are simply functional. What's important is that the flow of information is constant and the interface is easy to handle. Huge chunks of land must be constantly monitored as armies are directed from one place to another, and it seems as though there are crucial strategic decisions to be made every few seconds.

The musical score is as good as you'd expect from a CD, but the soundtrack's biggest surprises come from another



***Lords'* sophisticated story line and strategies may take time to fully comprehend, but the arcade sequences and exceptional soundtrack help players glide through the learning process.**

Looking at these monster monikers should give you a clue as to the game's intended audience. I hate to say it, but this is not the type of game that the average 12-year-old is going to enjoy, particularly one who has been raised on the likes of Mario, Sonic and Bonk. Not that youngsters should be discouraged from trying to get into *Lords of the Rising Sun*—hey, if I were the parent of a sixth-grader who had the ability to understand the rift between the Genji and Heike clans, or to keep track of which troops are following the

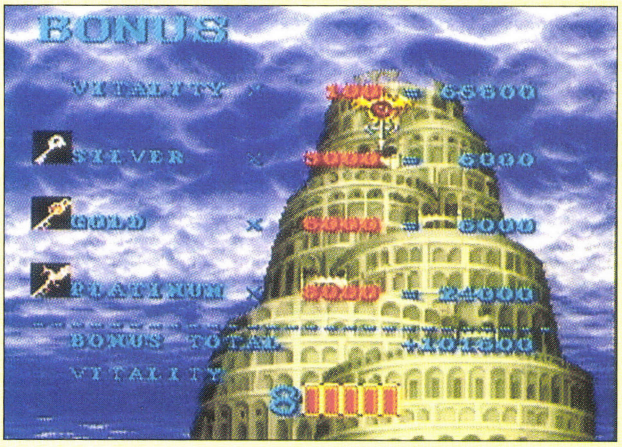
orders of a particular warlord, I'd be pretty darned proud! But this is mostly a challenge for older players, preferably strategy fanatics who can devote many hours to the subtleties of territorial conquest. Believe me, if you're at all interested in the story line, it's fairly easy to lose yourself in the game's richly detailed atmosphere and ever-changing environment.

Of course, the patient gamer will be handsomely rewarded by some of the more instinctive scenarios in *Lords of the Rising Sun*. Yes, there are arcade-style sequences buried in the course of your adventure. A beautifully drawn side-scrolling chase on horseback invites you to do some hacking with your samurai sword, as do the scenes when your army attempts to conquer cities by slicing through their inhabitants and knocking down doors. My favorite is a first-person "shooting gallery" sequence in which you can pick off soldiers with a bow and arrow as they climb over the walls that surround your fortress.

If you're looking for a colorful, lighthearted TurboPad exercise, save your money for future TurboGrafx-16 releases like *Splash Lake* or *Buster Brothers*. *Lords of the Rising Sun* is cut from an entirely different cloth—but those who are willing to invest a little time are going to find a lot to like here.

—Chris Bieniek

Turbo Technologies Inc.
6701 Center Drive West, Suite 500
Los Angeles, CA 90045
(310) 641-4622



Magic Sword

CAPCOM

For the Super NES ($59.95)

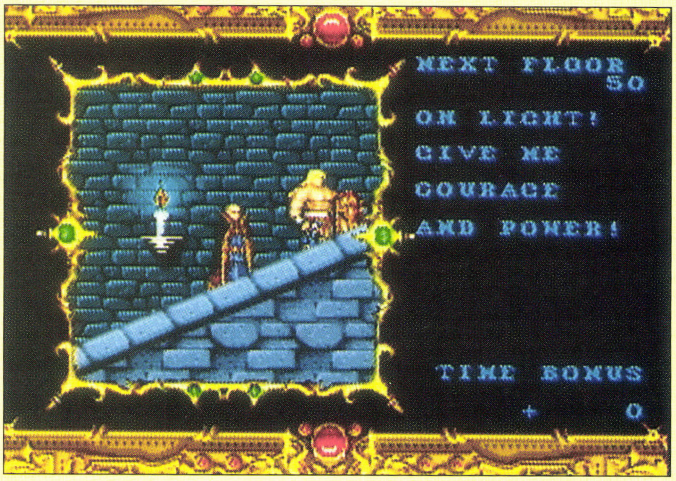
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

Regrettably, no story background material was provided with our review copy of *Magic Sword*—just a sheet with basic control and game screen descriptions. But Mensa members aren't required to figure out what's going on here: sword & sorcery slash action. In the case of *Magic Sword*, what you see is pretty much it.

You're the Blond Warrior Guy, who journeys into a tower to take on the Really Evil One because the enemy has an evil grip on the Good People and their community, I presume. There are scores of floors for you to rush through, while slashing skeleton foot soldiers, demons, bears, pesky flying things and whatever else might come your way with unfriendly intent.

The majority of the floors only require you to make it from one end to the other, where an exit door is. Still, after passing a number of levels, you fight the customary heavy. Usually, it is a monster, such as a griffin or a hydra, which takes shots at you from above in the air. If you defeat the monster, you will receive a nifty new sword to use.

Treasure trunks are everywhere. They contain keys or magic that increase your energy levels and defensive or offensive power. A fairy that is released drops food for you to consume. Some trunks are booby-trapped and will burst into flames, knocking down your energy level; but



In addition to slaying enemies and gathering treasure, the hero of *Magic Sword* may free allies from their prison cells and let them join him in battle.

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Play simultaneously or go head-to-head against another player in the special "versus" mode. Or take on the street scum alone in the single-player mode.

This could be the toughest fight of your life. Better start swinging now!

The roughest, toughest street-fighting game ever!

JALECO™

CIRCLE #115 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

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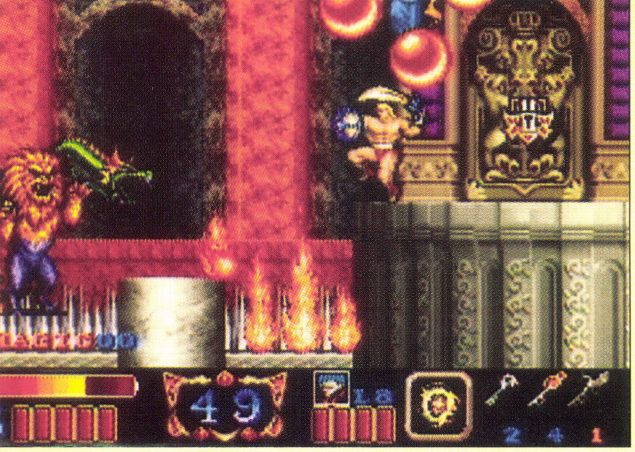


The allies in *Magic Sword* come from a menu of all-too-familiar types, including ninja, mage, sorcerer, ogre and female warrior.

there's no way to tell which trunks are rigged and which aren't.

Unique to this game are the ally characters you can free from prisons with a key you've collected. They respond with a (barely audible) "thank you" and will tag along if you wish, following every one of your player's movements. Their firepower is augmented with yours, so allies help out a lot in the tower's higher floors, where the action intensifies.

Allies come from the menu of *types* that are all too familiar. There are the ninja, mage, sorcerer, ogre and female warrior, to list some. Each ally type has his or her own special shooting power, but they all serve the same purpose: to help you kill the bad guys faster and with less effort.

Fast describes not so much the action as the *mood* of the game. Your player rushes through a level as if he were on roller skates. Though there are many, many floors in this Tower of Evilness, they're all short in length and repeated under the guise of minor graphic redressing. And, despite an increase in difficulty, it doesn't take long to get through a floor.

One very annoying aspect is the alarm that sounds when your energy level becomes low. The beeping continues regardless of how long it will be till you come across some food or other means of restoring your energy. How irritating is this? No more so than that early-morning alarm buzzer that wakes you up for school or work.

Its title is uninspired, and this SNES game is very standard stuff as well, with the exception of its "ally" feature. It's doubtful even a fleshed-out backstory would pump up the lack of vitality. The "attitude" of *Magic Sword* misindexes fast pacing with video-game action, leaning its appeal toward the severely impatient.

—Howard H. Wen

Capcom
3303 Scott Blvd.
Santa Clara, CA 95054
(408) 727-0400

Neutopia II

TTI

For the TurboGrafx-16 ($49.99)

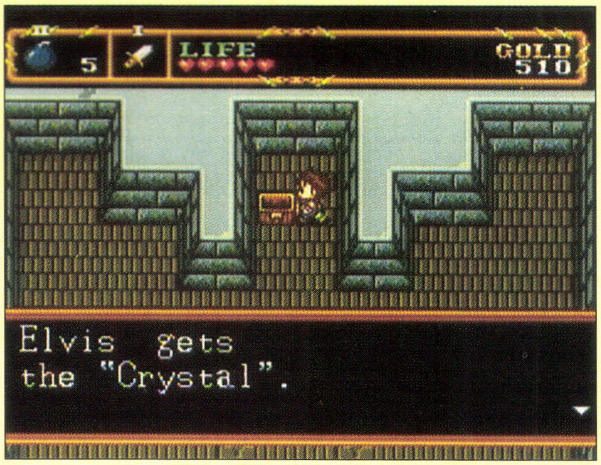
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Question #1083 on the video gamer's SAT test: "*Neutopia* is to the TurboGrafx-16 as _____ is to the NES." If you've been taking notes, you know that the correct response is *The Legend of Zelda*. Like *Zelda*, *Neutopia* is a hybrid action/role-playing game in which you explore vast territories while doing battle with thousands of beasts in order to expunge evil from the world.

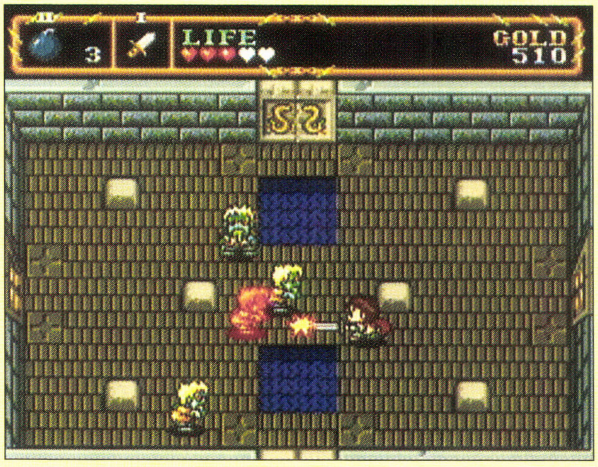
This sequel has been a long time coming, nearly two years. Yet for all the time Hudson Soft has taken to produce *Neutopia II*, one would almost think this was a rerun. The look and feel of the game are identical to the first; the same items and interface are used; the same obstacles are placed in your path. It's almost as if the creators had taken all the same graphics and puzzles, put them in a bag, tossed it around and...voilà: Shake-and-Bake arcade adventure.

Fans of *Neutopia* will appreciate the expanded *Legend of Zelda*-like world of *Neutopia II*.

The differences are few: a new selection of enemies, a slightly different plot (it's still the same theme, though: rid Neutopia of the encroaching evil) and a huge, single game world rather than a great number of smaller, separate worlds.



Neutopia II is written as a "next generation" continuation. You are the son of Furei, grandson of Murdock. Furei, we're told, died in an immense battle with Rafael, the Evil Overlord. Your mission begins as you search for your father, missing and presumed dead, who went to battle the new monsters that have shown up around the Neutopian countryside. Finding your father involves a tangle of smaller subplots and side trips, and, once you find him (no small task), you learn that the serious work is all still ahead of you.



Turbo Technologies Inc.'s *Neutopia II* is a long game that offers a ton of play value, yet it still moves along quickly.

Sounds good, but those who paid close attention to the first game recall that it involved Jazeta battling Dirth to save Neutopia, so I'm not sure where Furei, Murdock and Rafael came into the story. But these, as with most plots in video games, are very minor details.

Solving a subplot typically means going into a labyrinth, moving blocks around and defeating the underground dwellers. You'll uncover hidden rooms by blowing up walls with bombs, and eventually you'll locate the boss, defeat it and take its treasure. Then you explore new areas on the surface, visiting towns and talking to citizens, increasing your strength and the quality of your equipment. The only real variation is in the look of the terrain and the difficulty of the obstacles, which get significantly tougher the further you venture into the game. There's far less variety here than in something like *Zelda 3*, which requires much more imagination and creativity in problem-solving. Still, *Neutopia II* does offer a ton of play value; the labyrinths are neither so long nor so involved that you get frustrated, and you're constantly receiving positive reinforcement by acquiring new skills, buying or finding interesting items and weapons and being assigned lots of new side tasks.

There are a few visual improvements and special effects in this second installment (I particularly liked the underwater sequence), but, for the most part, the graphics are identical to those in the first game: not very detailed, very cartoony, more typical of an 8-bit machine than a 16-bit machine. I did notice a few slowdowns when the screen was crammed with enemies, but this was rare. Sound effects and music are decent; there's enough variety in the music that you don't go nutsoid from the repetition. There's no battery backup, but you're frequently given a 48-character password (yowch!), and it seems to contain an amazing amount of information.

I enjoyed *Neutopia II*, despite the cookie-cutter graphics and its overall similarity to the first game. It's a long game, which makes it a value, yet it moves along quickly. I'd welcome more originality and a bit more graphic sophistication in the next *Neutopia* though.

—Josh Mandel

Turbo Technologies Inc.
6701 Center Drive West, Suite 500
Los Angeles, CA 90045
(310) 641-4622

Hook

SONY IMAGESOFT
For the Super NES ($59.95)

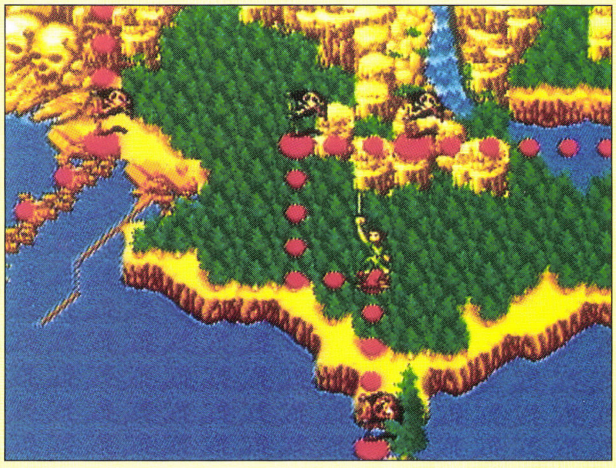
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC							7			
GRAPHICS									9	
PLAYABILITY							7			
OVERALL							7			

Somewhere in America there lives a person who's seen *Hook* seven or eight times, wolfs down three bowls of *Hook* breakfast cereal every morning, owns the complete set of *Hook* action figures (even though he or she is 30 years old) and comes home after a hard day's work to plug Sony's assortment of *Hook* video games into the NES, Super NES or Game Boy, perhaps hoping to relive pleasant memories of Steven Spielberg's overstuffed, too-eager-to-please, not-quite blockbuster.

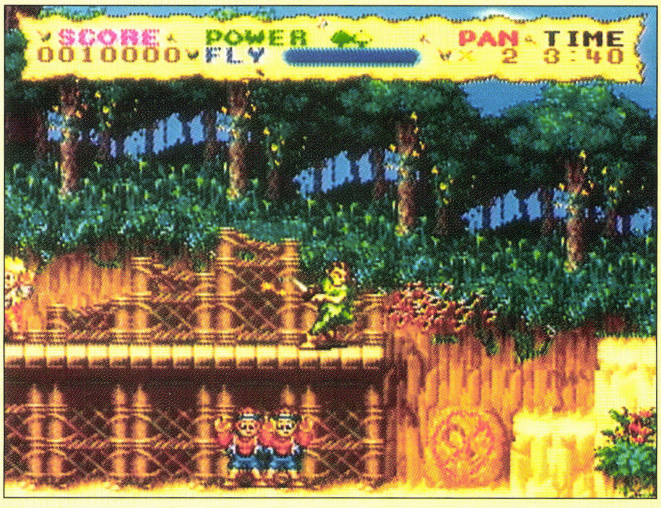
Well, that person isn't me.

That caveat aside, I must report that—unlike the majority of movie-licensed video games I've played—*Hook* isn't nearly the disaster it could have been. The main thing it has going for it is its gorgeous, burnished-green-and-gold backgrounds, which reminded me of another Super NES game, Data East's *Joe & Mac*. (This true-to-nature look seems to be distinctive to Nintendo's 16-bit system—I haven't seen anything like it for the Genesis.) The trouble is, once you subtract *Hook*'s impressive visuals, you're left with a standard, algebraic, jump-and-slash action game. In other words, just like the movie, there's not a whole lot of substance beneath the gee-whiz, glittering surface.

The plot, a straightforward reduction of the original film's "high concept" (which has a paunchy, middle-aged Peter Pan journeying to Never-Never Land to save his children from the evil Captain Hook), is nothing special: Basically, you hack your way through a dozen or so levels filled with menacing pirates, pesky creatures and the occasional—inexplicable—boulder-throwing caveman, with easy-to-defeat boss characters showing up at the end of about every other stage. There's lots of platform-jumping (high up in the trees, from branch to branch), one power-up weapon (a fire-spitting sword that disappears, to your great annoyance, every time a bad guy so much as looks at you cross-eyed) and only one real innovation: When Peter collects pixie dust from Tinkerbell, he can fly for about ten seconds at a time. (Julia Roberts fans, please note: The Tinkmeister is here reduced to a sprite-sized, nondescript blob of fuzz, so you can wipe that drool from your lower lips.)



It's obvious that *Hook*'s programmers put a lot of work into this game's true-to-life play control, and, while I'm no great fan of this technique (I like my video-game characters *fast*; if I wanted realism I'd dress up in green tights and swing through trees myself), I must say they did a good job. The button-punching seems mushy at first, because Peter's movements approximate those of a real-life human being, but, once you get used to it, you'll have him jumping from ledge to ledge, changing



***Hook*'s graphics are as delightful as the movie's, and the game fortunately omits the film's "high-concept" story line.**

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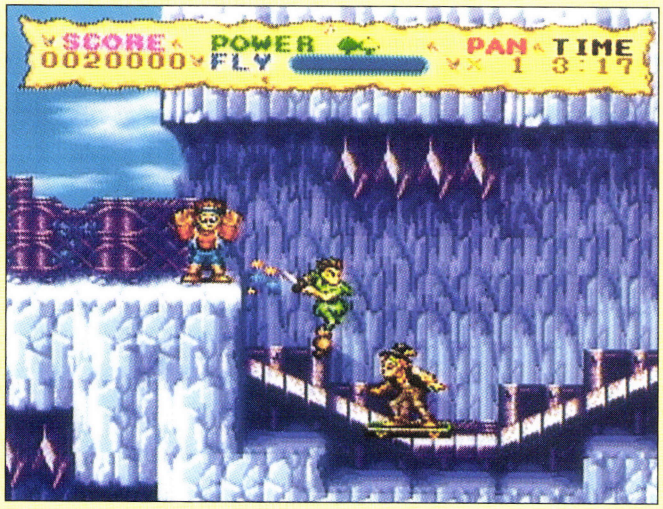

It's obvious that *Hook*'s programmers put a lot of work into the game's true-to-life play control, and they did a good job.

direction in midair (all right, I guess real people can't actually do *this*) and swimming around underwater with the greatest of ease.

Whether or not it's because so much attention was paid to the game's visuals, the music in *Hook* is surprisingly low-key and unobtrusive—even if you play for hours, you're unlikely to find yourself humming the theme song in the shower. As for the sound effects, the only one that makes any sort of impression is Peter's painful grunt whenever he gets hit by a bad guy. This is another video-game trend I'm not too fond of: I have no problem leading my characters to gruesome deaths, but I don't want to have to hear them suffer—over and over again—while I'm doing it.

Most disappointing of all, *Hook* the video game, like *Hook* the movie, is surprisingly low on laughs. About the only touch of on-screen humor is when Peter loses a life—he explodes out of his forest attire and becomes, once again, a short, balding, potbellied twerp. More amusing is the manual, which calmly describes the game's none-too-imaginatively named stages: the Nevertree, Neverland Forest, Neverland Rocky Mountains, Neverland Waterfall and Lagoon, Neverland Underground, Neverland Ice and Snow Region, Neverland Over the Forest, and Neverland Skeleton Rock. *Hook* is diverting enough while it lasts, I suppose, but, when you're finished, don't be surprised if you wind up thinking to yourself: Never again.

—Bob Strauss

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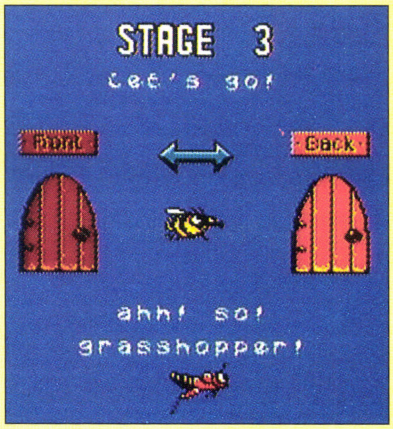
Bee 52

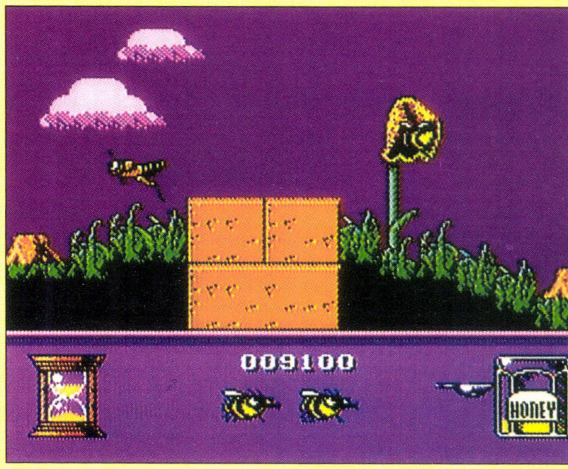
CAMERICA

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($44.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Multiplane scrolling graphics and an unusual cast of villains place *Bee 52* above other 8-bit video games.





The first time I saw Camerica's *Bee 52*, one of my eyes was looking out from underneath a raised eyebrow. There was a lot more to this side-scrolling shooter than a successful crossbreeding of the arcade classics *Defender* and *Centipede*.

For one thing, the two-layered scrolling of the background scenery is a welcome feature. Though hardware design has allowed most Genesis programmers to take such things for granted, it's always a pleasant surprise to see the effect in an 8-bit title. Only a handful of developers have gone through the trouble of writing code in order to generate multiplane scrolling on the NES, and *Bee 52* really stands out because of it.

The other notable feature of this game is that it was expected to be the first in a new line of NES titles to be priced at under $30 each. Unfortunately, that's no longer the case. I would like to have reported that Camerica is helping to usher in a new era of affordable electronic entertainment—indeed, the company will soon announce details on how it expects to do just that. In the meantime, the most we can hope for is that others will get the hint. Sunsoft is another game manufacturer that has demonstrated its willingness to lower the initial cost of some of its nonblockbuster titles—let's hope it's the start of a trend.

Before I get too far from the subject at hand, let me give you the lowdown on *Bee 52*. In your role as the title character, it's your job to venture out into the yard in search of pollen, which you'll bring back to your hive for making honey. To do this,

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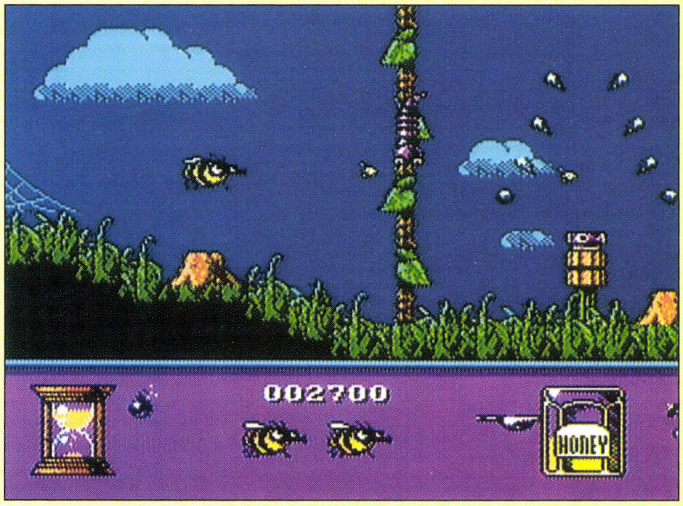
you'll have to stop and dip your snout into blooming flowers as you avoid all sorts of nasty insects and garden obstacles. Once you've made enough honey to fill a jar, you advance to the next level, but you can only carry three flowers' worth of pollen at a time.

Aside from the depth of the backgrounds, the graphics are generally well-drawn and nicely animated. The bee makes for a pretty charismatic hero, and I like him even better when he's able to grab power-up items like bombs, auto-fire icons, shields and "drone" sidekicks. The cast of villains is almost as appealing as the protagonist, and the game makes the most of them by trotting out a new one at the start of each level, adding to the ants, grasshoppers and killer wasps that were introduced earlier. By the time you break out of the yard to battle the bubble creatures in level five, things are very hectic indeed.

There aren't a lot of video-game designers whose work I can recognize with my eyes closed. The UK's Rare, Ltd. is one example that comes to mind, and *Bee 52*'s "plop-plop" musical rhythms and echo effects reinforce the position of Codemasters Software Co., Ltd. (another UK design house) in those same ranks. It's unfortunate, then, that the lively music is limited to the title screen and between-round breaks—it's pretty quiet during the game itself. While not insufficient, the sound effects are certainly not going to send your parents running to fetch a can of Raid. Heck, the bee doesn't even buzz!

Happily, the engaging game play saves the day. *Bee 52*'s "cute" looks and sense of humor are very deceiving, as the physics of the bee's flight are quite different from the way most video-game characters move. The challenge involved in learning to fly is only half the fun—the other half is finding out what each new level holds in store.



In Camerica's *Bee 52*, the challenge involved in learning to fly is only half the fun—the other half is finding out what each new level holds in store.

I'm disappointed that *Bee 52* couldn't be released with the lower price tag as announced previously, but the hours of enjoyment the game provides make it a good buy nonetheless.

—Chris Bieniek

Camerica Corporation
3415 14th Ave.
Markham, ON
CANADA L3R 0H3
(416) 470-2515

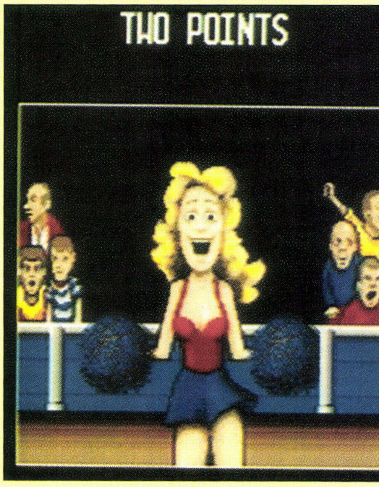
Arch Rivals

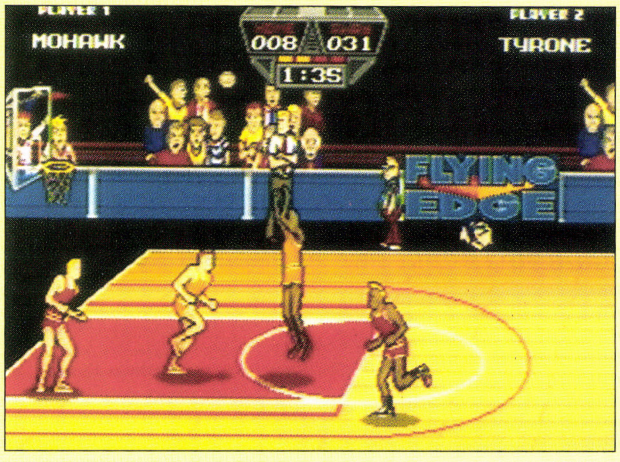
FLYING EDGE

For the Sega Genesis ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10

Chris Bieniek, VG&CE Associate Editor and coffee achiever, wrote about the NES conversion of this Williams coin-op game way back in the March 1991 issue. In the review, he said: "I'm sure [*Arch Rivals* will] eventually be treated better by more advanced video-game systems."





Sega Genesis owners who've waited more than a year for *Arch Rivals* will discover a game almost identical in play to the NES translation of the original coin-op.

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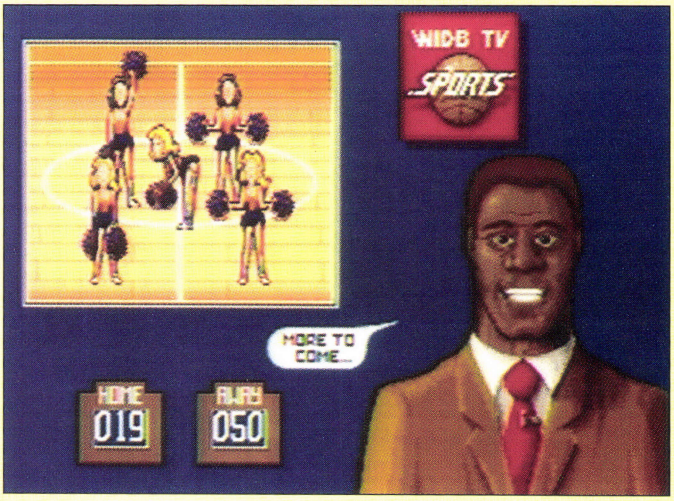
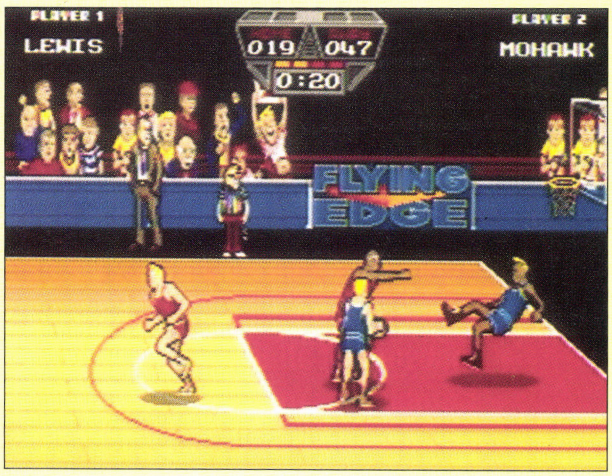
Chris was right; the graphics and sounds of the Genesis version are much better than the NES version. Chris also said: "*Arch Rivals* wears out its welcome after repeated play." Unfortunately, that's the case with the Genesis version as well.

Now that I've finished shamelessly cribbing Chris' review, let me describe the game. *Arch Rivals* is two-on-two basketball with a twist: The referee is blind as a bat. In other words, there are no fouls. Is your opponent driving to the basket? Take him out with a flying tackle. Want to steal the ball? Punch the other guy's lights out and it's yours.





While it has a few neat graphic details, like shattering backboards, *Arch Rivals'* graphics are not even close to what the Genesis can do.

At the start of the game, you choose a one- or two-player game and select your player. There are eight players in *Arch Rivals*, each with his own particular talent (shooting, rebounding, fighting and so on). The other player on your team is semicontrolled by the Genesis, but you can make him pass or shoot the ball any time you want.

Once the game begins, you're presented with a side-scrolling view of the court that shows a bit less than half of the court at any one time. On offense, you can pass and shoot; on defense, you can block, punch or dive into another player. Simple, right?

In fact, the one-player mode is way *too* simple. You'll be kicking serious butt after only a few games. It's amazingly easy to punch out the computer players (especially after they've just inbounded the ball) and stuff home a rim-rocking dunk. There's no way to change the difficulty level and there's no playoff mode, so the only way to make the game harder is to play against a friend. There's an even better reason to play the two-player mode: It's much more interesting (although it also grows tiresome after a short while).

Arch Rivals' graphics are plain and uninspired, not even close to what the Genesis can do. The players lack detail, and some of the close-up graphics shown after a basket is scored are downright ugly. There are a few neat graphic details, like the shattering backboards, but that's not enough to make up for the lack of detail. The sound is also average, although there is a ton of speech sampled straight from the arcade game ("Pass it!" "I'm open!" and so on).

The two-player mode is fun for awhile, and younger gamers will enjoy the mindless violence, but most players will be bored stiff after a few hours of *Arch Rivals*. There's just not enough game play here to hold anyone's interest for long.

—Zach Meston

Flying Edge
71 Audrey Ave.
Oyster Bay, NY 11771
(516) 624-8888

Gold Medal Challenge

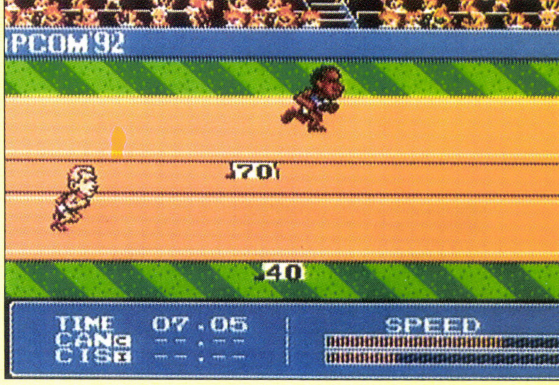
CAPCOM

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

The video gold medals are up for grabs with the Olympic-like contest *Gold Medal Challenge* from Capcom. With this being an Olympic year, it's only natural that a few track-and-field contests would appear. Eighteen events provide friendly competition between one to eight players, with only well-trained fingers required to compete.

The game consists of a variety of track, field, indoor and swimming events. The track portion is comprised of several running events: the 100-, 200- and 300-meter dashes; the 100-meter relay; the 110-meter hurdles; and a 42-kilometer marathon. For



the 100-meter events, it's basically just a matter of hitting your buttons as fast as possible (I'm sure you wouldn't dream of using an autofire controller here). For the longer runs, while speed is still the main ingredient of success, endurance is equally as important. A strength meter must be monitored to keep your athlete from running out of gas before reaching the finish line.

The marathon event requires no physical skills, only mental. Players must choose how fast their athlete should run through each of six legs of the course. Overhead and side views show the twists and turns of the course, as well as any hills and valleys that lie ahead. Each athlete starts the race with a limited amount of strength, so sprinting through the course is out of the question.

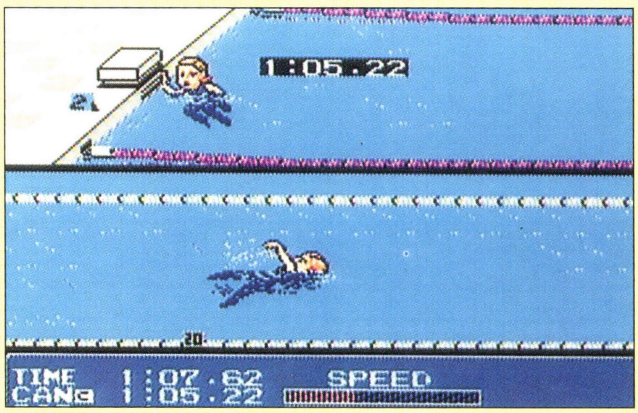
The field events consist of the long jump, the javelin throw, the triple jump, the shot put and the high jump. Once again, quick button-bashing on the approach and during the throw/jump provides the best results, with the angle of your attempt controlled by the stick—simple, but effective.

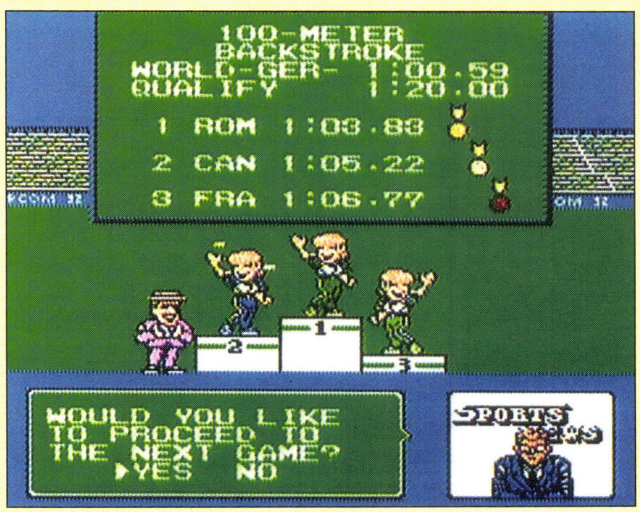
Weightlifting and the vaulting horse make up the indoor portion of the game. The first requires (you guessed it) quick button mashing, but the horse has perhaps the most complexity of any event, with six possible moves from springboard to horse to mat.

Finally, the swimming events are made up of the 100-meter breaststroke, butterfly, freestyle and the 200-meter medley. All of the above require rhythm and timing more than speed, as well as some strategy in timing your athlete's breathing (you can't win the race if your swimmer drowns!).

A training option allows a player to practice any of the aforementioned events, except the marathon. If you manage to break the record for any of the events, your results and your initials are stored in memory for all to see. A battery backup keeps the unofficial practice records, the official records from competition and up to two saved games intact.

The graphics and music are what you would expect for the type of game that *Gold Medal Challenge* is, but it is worth noting that the athletes are well represented, and not just graphically—there is both ethnic and sexual diversity among the athletes shown on-screen. Background scrolling is good, which is important when you are running down a track and trying to jump or throw at the last possible second. The music and sound effects are okay as well.





Fast button-pressing is the key to success in most of *Gold Medal Challenge*'s 18 Olympic events.

Although *Gold Medal Challenge* has many different events, the game is easy to play (obviously easier in some sections with autofire) and provides the most enjoyment when more than one player participates. Getting started is as simple as choosing the number of players, and then having each choose a country to represent. The ability for so many players to compete (two at a time during the track and swimming events) is the game's strongest point, and, along with the game's simplicity, is what will keep *Gold Medal Challenge* interesting and enjoyable.

—Brent Walker

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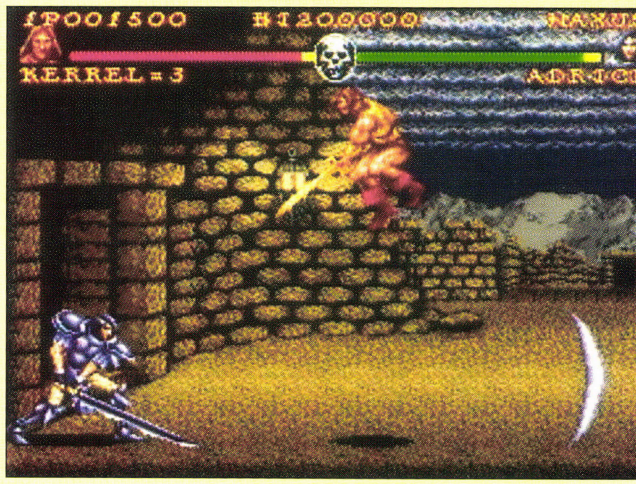
3303 Scott Blvd.
Santa Clara, CA 95054
(408) 727-0400

Battle Blaze

AMERICAN SAMMY
For the Super NES ($54.95)

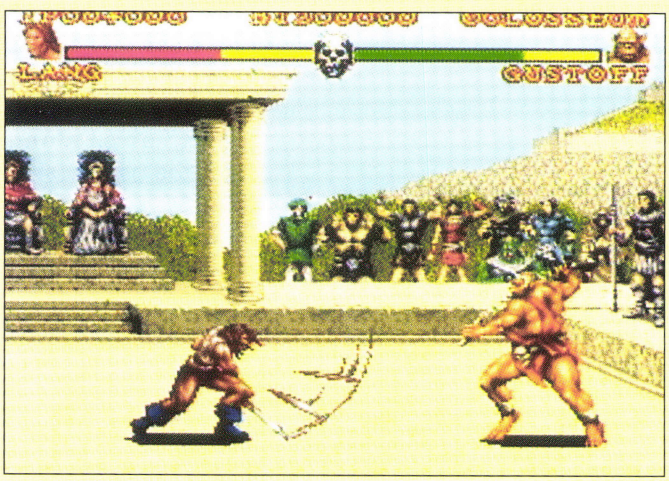
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10



The moment I saw *Battle Blaze* in action, four words (and a Roman numeral) flashed through my head: *Street Fighter II* with swords. Unfortunately, this game isn't even close to *SF II* in terms of graphics, sound or game play.

Battle Blaze's story line is brief and to the point. The Dark Lord, Autarch, wants to take over the land of Virg, and he's unleashed five phantoms to help him accomplish his goal. The phantoms have possessed four of the champions of Virg, turning them against each other and leaving the King unguarded. The fifth champion, Durill, slew himself with his own sword before the phantom could possess him. Durill's son, Kerrel, has vowed to avenge his father by defeating Autarch.

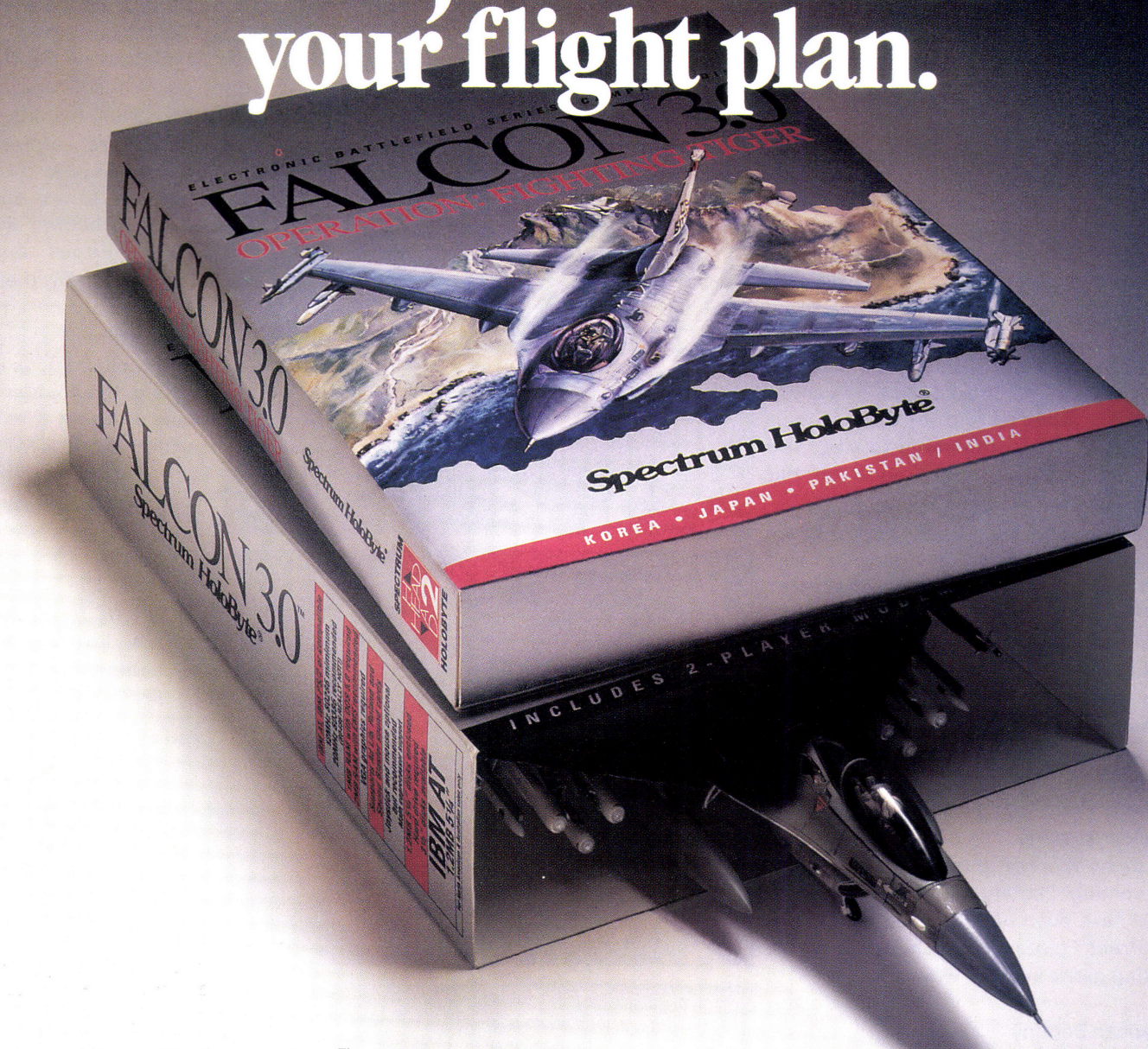
Battle Blaze has two modes of play: The Hero and The Battle. The Hero is a one-player-only quest where you fight the four possessed champions and then must fight Autarch himself. The Battle is more accurately a series of battles within the Colosseum of Berponea. One or two players can compete in The Battle mode.



Battle Blaze is what _Street Fighter II_ might be like if players were armed with swords.

Each of the four champions in *Battle Blaze* has a weapon. Tesya is a lovely lady armed with twin daggers; Lord Gustoff is a goblin who fights with a large morningstar; Shnouzer is a werewolf who uses the power of the Thunderclaw; and Adrick, a swordsman, fights with the enormous Hell Blade. (Autarch fights with his bare hands, but he's got

We've just extended your flight plan.



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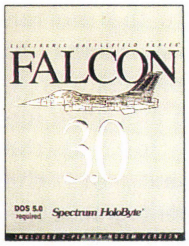

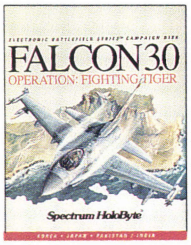

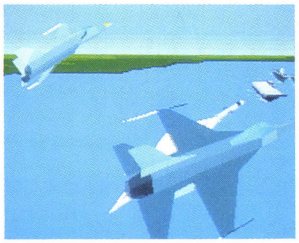

Operation: Fighting Tiger requires Falcon 3.0

For Visa/MasterCard orders call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: 1-800-695-GAME (Orders Only).
For technical questions and availability call: 1-510-522-1164 (M-F: 9am–5pm PST)

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A Division of Sphere, Inc. 2061 Challenger Drive, Alameda, CA 94501

CIRCLE #119 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

magical powers to make up for his lack of armament.)

The Battle introduces a fifth champion: Lang, who's a clone of Kerrel, except for his darker skin tone. This allows two players to have an even matchup in The Battle mode, since Kerrel and Lang have the same skills.

Battle Blaze sounds great up to this point, but it falls apart once combat begins. The background graphics of each area are poorly drawn; the combatants have a limited array of moves; and, worst of all, *Battle Blaze* suffers from occasional slowdown, which affects game play. Sometimes, your opponent will attack so slowly that you can analyze the attack he's using and counterattack before he can do anything about it. And, of course, your opponent can do the same to you. The slowdown doesn't occur frequently, but it's very frustrating when it happens.

I mentioned the poorly drawn backgrounds above, so it's only fair that I also mention the well-animated character graphics. If they had been drawn with a bit more detail, they would have been great. As it is, they're merely good. The sound is also good, with adequate grunts and groans to complement the action. If only the game play was as good as the audiovisuals....

Battle Blaze isn't a terrible game, but it is below average. The one-player mode is too easy, the two-player mode doesn't have enough variety and the audiovisuals could have been better. Spend your bucks on *Street Fighter II*, which is a superior fighting game in every way.

—Zach Meston

American Sammy
2421-205th St., Suite D-104
Torrance, CA 90501
(310) 320-7167

Dragon's Fury

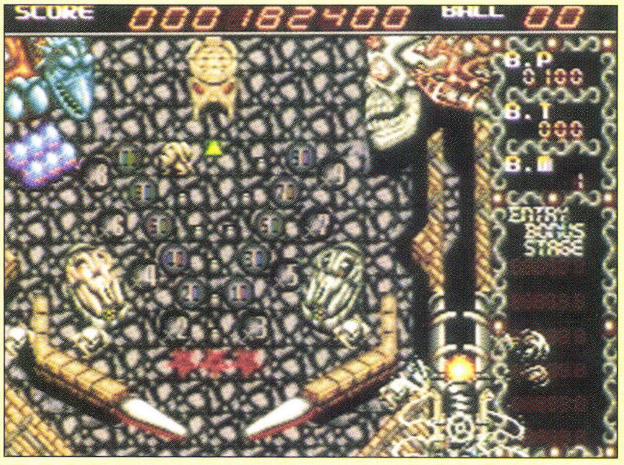
TENGEN

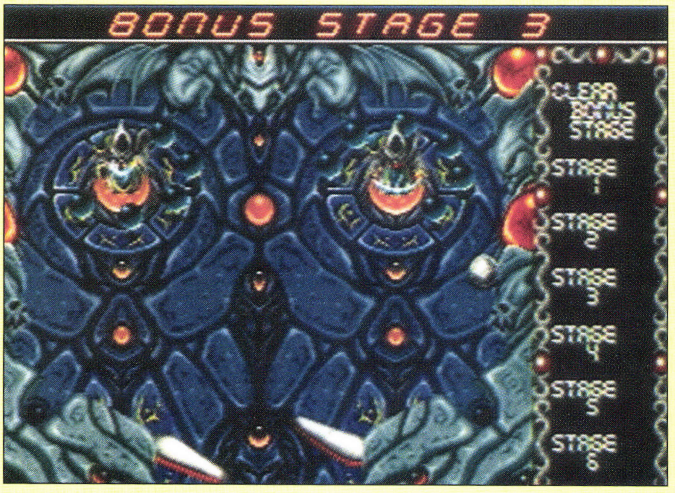
For the Sega Genesis ($54.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

One of the few reasons my TurboGrafx-16 hasn't gathered too much dust in between new releases is the game *Devil's Crush*, a pinball playalike that has, for years, been *the* pinball video game supreme. Welp, sorry TG-16, but you'll need a new classic of your own, because Tengen is putting the finishing touches on *Dragon's Fury*, a translation of *Devil's Crush* for the Genesis. While *Dragon's Fury* is not a perfect translation, the differences are almost inconsequential.

***Dragon's Fury*'s game play, sound and graphics more than make up for the differences between real pinball and this video version.**





Chuck Jones, the brilliance behind the *Road Runner* and other Warner Brothers cartoons, once observed that if something could be done in real life, there was no point in doing it in a cartoon. So it is with video games: Why have a pinball "simulation" if it's only going to mirror real life? This seems to be the philosophy behind *Dragon's Fury*, which is so outrageous that you could never have a *real* pinball game do the same thing. The "table" is three screens tall (but scrolls smoothly to keep up with the ball's location) and decorated like some sort of demonic monastery, with horned guards lurking behind gates, gigantic skulls and alien heads worked into the mortar, and troops of skeletons marching around in formation. At the apex of the monastery is a revolving pentagram complete with hooded monks. And everywhere you look, in mind-boggling profusion, you'll find wormy Giger-inspired

tubes and tunnels, flashing lights, flippers, drop targets, shambling creatures of the night, etc. Eyeballs follow your ball around the screen, swollen coccoons or skulls burst open when you hit them, tongues whip around to knock your ball into the gutter and much, much more. The entire screen crawls with activity.

At the same time, this is one of the game's few faults. Real pinball fans may be disturbed to find that this is not authentic pinball; there are many obstacles and locations you cannot reach through your skill with the flippers. Instead, you'll count more on luck than on skill to reach these targets. But this is a niggling complaint; while all the dynamics of real pinball aren't intact, all the fun is there.

With excellent pinball game play, fascinatingly grotesque graphics and a chilling soundtrack, *Dragon's Fury*, by Tengen, is a must-have Genesis game.

Many of the targets will teleport you to one of over half a dozen bonus screens. These bonus sequences are excellent (and some appear to be new to this version of the game). There are too many of these games-within-a-game to describe, but none is anything less than challenging and visually stunning. Each bonus screen has a particular goal—worth mondo bonus points if you can reach it. Some of these goals are extremely tough, and some have graphics that are just so cool you can't possibly appreciate all the little details while you're actually playing. Thankfully, the game has a two-player mode so that you can check out the minutiae while your bud's taking a turn.

The colors are more garish than in the TG-16 version, and the graphics slightly less distinct, but you'll never notice unless you compare the two side by side. The playfield looks a little smaller as well. Sound is nearly identical, and this includes some excellent explosions, demonic laughter and weird chanting. The options screen lets you configure the pad or joystick—right flipper, left flipper and "tilt" so you can, in effect, pound on the front of the table a little. Difficulty is also adjustable by changing the speed of the ball.

Despite the fact that Tengen appears to have cut a few corners here and there, *Dragon's Fury* is still a must-have Genesis game. Excellent pinball game play, fascinatingly grotesque graphics, a chilling soundtrack. What more could any devilish gamer want?

—Josh Mandel

Tengen
675 Sycamore Drive
Milpitas, CA 95035
(408) 473-9400

Falcon

TTI

For the TurboGrafx-16 ($49.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

If you're a computer user, you're probably already familiar with the *Falcon* series of flight/combat simulators. If you're not a computer user, you've undoubtedly heard of *Falcon* and wished you could play. We've got good news and bad news. The good news is that owners of the TurboGrafx-16 or TurboExpress game systems can now hop aboard the Falcon for some awesome air antics. The bad news is that the TG-16 version, while an immensely playable game, isn't as complete a simulator as its computerized big brother.

That's understandable, of course. After all, when translating a flight-simulator program to a video-game console, many limitations must be dealt with, not the least of which are limited forms of input (no keyboard, only buttons) and less memory. So, the TG-16 version of *Falcon* is more a combat video game than a full flight simulator. Nevertheless, enough basic aircraft controls—such as airspeed, altitude, directional and targeting indicators—remain to at least give the feeling of flying in combat, if not the full experience.

Falcon's flight screen features a head-up display that shows most of the important aircraft readouts. These include the aforementioned indicators, as well as fuel, damage and electronic countermeasure

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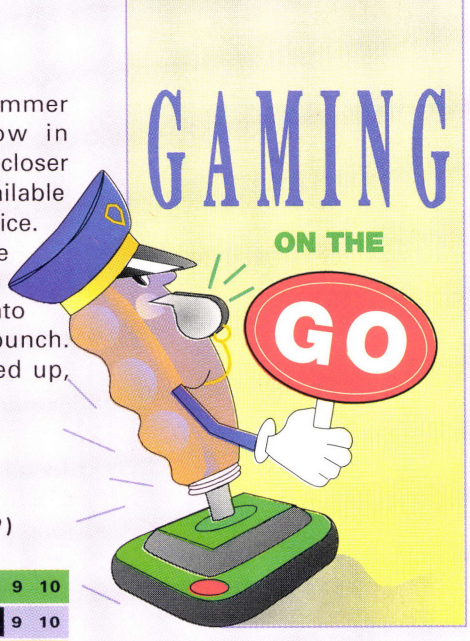
GAMING ON THE GO



Fresh from the floor of the Summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago, we're ready to take a closer look at some of the newest titles available for the portable system of your choice. There's plenty of exciting software on the way for each of the three major machines, so let's roll right into the most visible of this month's bunch. Hope your "Bat"-teries are charged up, 'cause here we go....

Batman Returns

ATARI

For the Atari Lynx ($49.99)

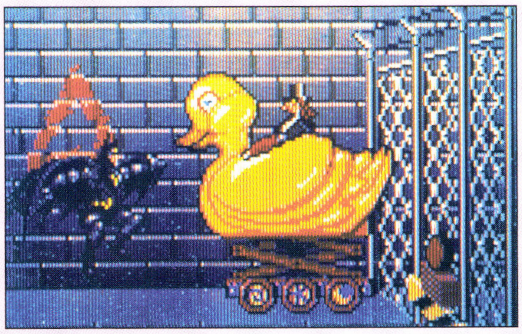
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC							■			
GRAPHICS								■		
PLAYABILITY							■			
OVERALL								■		

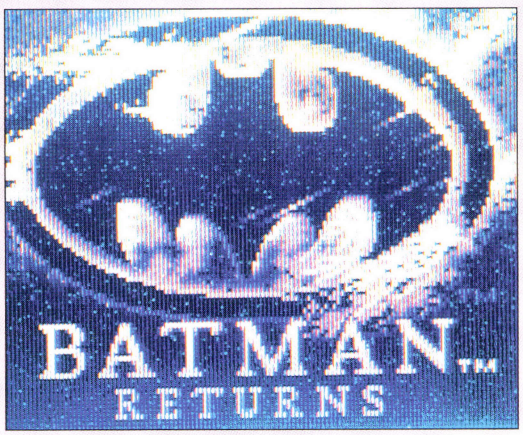
BY CHRIS BIENIEK

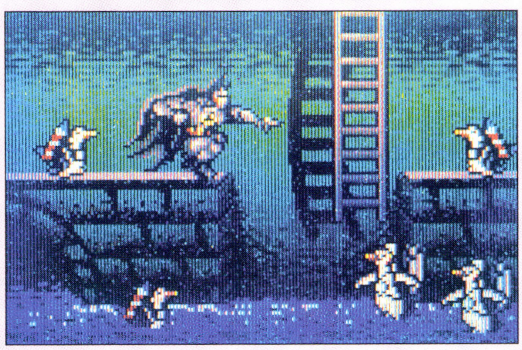
I don't know which was more difficult—trying to peek through the veil of secrecy that had surrounded every piece of information related to Warner Bros.' pet project or trying to work my way through the four long levels of *Batman Returns* on the Lynx.

One of the strongest Lynx titles ever released, this new side-scrolling beat-'em-up is also one of the most difficult to master. Not that the game is flawed—believe me, when you're killed, it's always your own fault—it just doesn't give you any breaks. Only one life per game, with no way to continue where you left off, and a constant flow of enemies attacking the ol' Caped Crusader with a relentless ferocity that could only be the work of a group of sadistic, maniacal game designers.

Seriously, a little memorization and a lot of control-pad dexterity should be all you'll need to battle your way through this movie tie-in. From the streets of Gotham City to its rooftops and sewers, and on to the Penguin's icy Arctic hideaway, the Dark Knight looks right at home on the Lynx. Though most of the game's scenarios are as moody and atmospheric as you can expect from the *Batman* of the '90s, the Penguin's giant rubber-duckie vehicle does provide a bit of comic relief, as do the hordes of penguins who waddle after our hero with rocket launchers strapped to their backs.







The Lynx version of *Batman Returns* brings the Bat, the Cat and the Penguin to the portable scene in style.

Other parts of the game are stunningly effective. When Batman passes in front of Shreck's department store, all he can do is take cover behind a mailbox as the building's facade explodes in a shower of broken glass. This defensive approach works well through most of the game, as you'll find that it's better to run away from certain enemies than to face them with your fists. For long-distance attacks, you can pick up Batarangs and vials of deadly acid to toss at your foes. These and other power-ups are fairly abundant, but they're not always located in obvious places.

All things considered, *Batman Returns* is pretty much a must-have for Lynx owners. I'm disappointed by the game's high retail price, but that's about the only negative thing I have to say about this hard-hitting title.

Atari Entertainment
500 Watersedge Drive, Suite 310
Lombard, IL 60148
(708) 629-6500

Wheel of Fortune

GAMETEK

For the Sega Game Gear ($39.95)

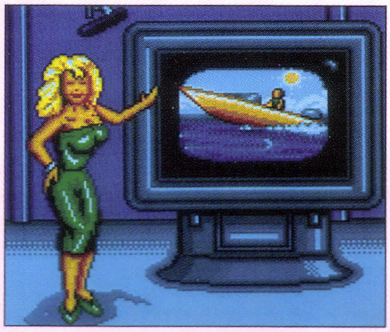
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC					■					
GRAPHICS						■				
PLAYABILITY						■				
OVERALL						■				

A newcomer to the color portable scene, GameTek isn't taking any chances with its first release for the Game Gear. *Wheel of Fortune* looks pretty good on this platform, and though I have my doubts about certain aspects of the control scheme, I'm expecting this one to do well on the strength of the name alone.

In addition to a library of over 4,500 puzzles that appear at random, the game includes most of the features of the *Wheel of Fortune* games that have already appeared on a number of different game systems and home computers. Up to three players can participate, with up to three computer-controlled characters. Of course, choosing three computer players makes for a pretty dull game, and playing a solo game with *no* computer players can get rather tedious, with meaningless wheel spaces like "free spin" and "miss a turn."

Letter-turner Vanna White doesn't look too bad here, particularly in the "autographed" full-screen portrait that appears after the title page. Players aren't given

much of a choice when choosing an on-screen surrogate, but the stereotypical yuppie, busty blonde and scowling grandma characters are bound to look like somebody's mirror image. The theme song is rendered fairly well, but that's about the only notable feature of an otherwise pedestrian soundtrack.



***Wheel of Fortune* is one of the first puzzle games available for the Game Gear.**

Since there aren't a lot of puzzle-type titles available for the Game Gear, it's a shame that *Wheel of Fortune* had to be muddled up by an annoyingly unresponsive set of controls. I had trouble moving the pointer around the screen quickly enough to select the letters to solve a puzzle as simple as "basketball player" before the allotted time expired. The game isn't very user-friendly, either—Game Gear novices might have trouble figuring out certain menu screens because there are no highlights or flashing cursors to focus your attention on what you're supposed to be doing.

Fortunately, the basic elements of *Wheel of Fortune* are enough to make the game enjoyable. Not a bad first effort from GameTek, which should be encouraged to work on Game Gear versions of other popular TV game shows.

GameTek Inc.
2999 NE 191st St., Suite 800
North Miami Beach, FL 33180
(305) 935-3995

Centipede

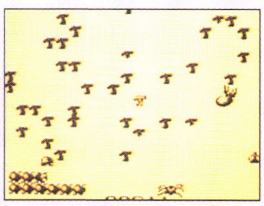
ACCOLADE

For the Nintendo Game Boy

($29.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

This is the third arcade classic that Accolade has brought to the Game Boy within the past year (*Asteroids* and *Missile Command* were the others), and I hope to see this trend continue. Developed by the Code Monkeys, whose work on the Game Boy rivals the best in the business, this cartridge brings new life to an historically significant contest with elaborate pregame music and two-player options, but remains faithful to the elegant simplicity and addicting game play of the original.



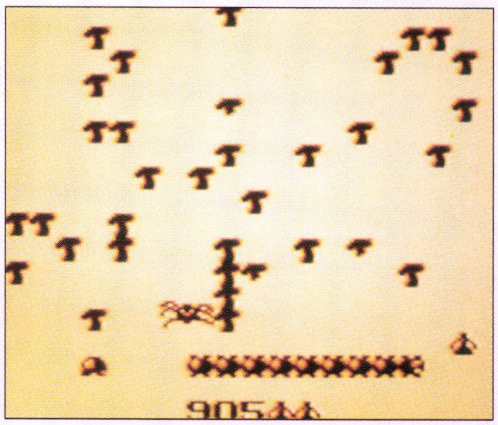
Fans of *Centipede* (and its more varied sequel, *Millipede*) are sure to recognize the format: It's a shoot-'em-up in the most literal sense of the term. To rid your mushroom garden of nasty insects, scorpions and the like, you must maneuver a spade-shaped weapon near the bottom of the screen, blasting any creatures who are unfortunate enough to find themselves in your path.

There's not much I can say about this game that hasn't been said already. Though the movements of the characters are not quite as smooth as I would have liked, the features that made it a hit a decade ago are more or less intact. Your character does seem to be able to move a bit higher than it could in the coin-op—about a third of the way up the screen.

In addition to a two-player (read: two Game Boys and two cartridges) cooperative mode, there's a nicely handled competition mode that automatically pauses the game when you die. This way, you'll always have enough time to pass the Game Boy to the other player when it's his or her turn.

My only gripe about *Centipede* is that the Game Boy strips this title of one of its most identifiable features: a constantly changing color scheme of soft pastels and flowery hues. But this relatively minor shortcoming isn't such that it should discourage players from taking a closer look at the game—it's another enjoyable blast from the past.

Accolade Inc.
550 S. Winchester Blvd.
San Jose, CA 95128
(408) 985-1700



The classic arcade shoot-'em-up makes its Game Boy debut: *Centipede*, from Accolade.

Hockey

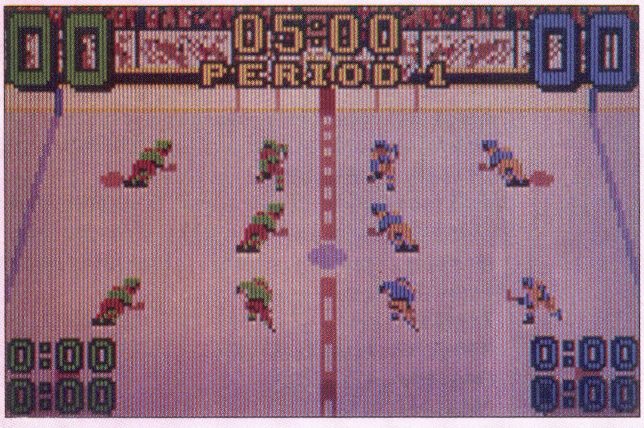
ATARI

For the Atari Lynx ($39.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

Happy, happy, joy, joy! Finally, a *real* sports game on the Lynx. Not just a quickie one-shot, *Hockey* is a carefully conceived product of Ed Ringler's Alpine Studios. This full-featured hockey experience has plenty of one- and two-player options, including the ability to practice the "fight" and "shootout" scenarios.

The game play is smooth and frantic, and the graphics are stylish. The music and sound are inconsistent, though, particularly in the fighting scenes, in which the wildly animated players pound each other to the accompaniment of digitized woofing and grunting, but very few sounds of the players actually striking each other are heard.



Lynx *Hockey* gives sports fans a reason to stand up and cheer.

Though it isn't licensed by the National Hockey League or its Players' Association, Lynx *Hockey* uses real city names. Uniform colors are sometimes dead-on—and sometimes not: San Jose's teal looks great, but not even the Montreal of the "Original Six" wore hot-pink jerseys like the players wear here.

Thankfully, the game's attention to other details really makes a favorable impression and somehow serves to make *Hockey* more than just a *Blades of Steel* clone. Sure, it's got side-scrolling rink action with close-ups of fights, but it also includes overhead face-offs, switchable penalties and referees, plus tons of stats. It even plays snippets of the American and/or Canadian national anthems before each contest.

The tie-breaking shootout sequences are extremely well-done, despite the inconvenience of having to turn your Lynx sideways (à la *Klax* and *Gauntlet: The Third Encounter*). In fact, VG&CE Associate Editor Mike Davila enjoyed the shootout so much that I don't think he even bothered to play the full-fledged hockey game at all!

I hate to admit that *Hockey* was worth the wait—it sure was an incredibly long wait, after all—but this really is a satisfying experience for fans of sports games. Now, bring on *Baseball Heroes* already!

Atari Entertainment
500 Watersedge Drive, Suite 310
Lombard, IL 60148
(708) 629-6500

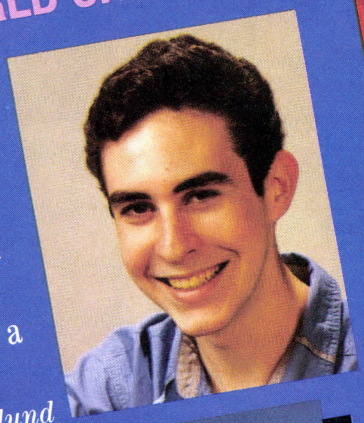
Next month, we'll try to focus a little more attention on the Game Gear. Not only are there more games on the way from third-party developers, but Sega alone has over a dozen Game Gear titles that are nearing completion. Look for more Game Boy coverage, as well as one of the strangest, most hysterical Lynx titles you'll ever see.

Reader feedback to this column is always appreciated. Please send any and all comments and suggestions to: VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT, Attn: *Gaming on the Go*, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Computer owners with access to the DELPHI information service can also contact me via electronic mail sent to user name VGCHRIS, or stop by the "World of Video Games" special interest group and drop me a note in the open forum.

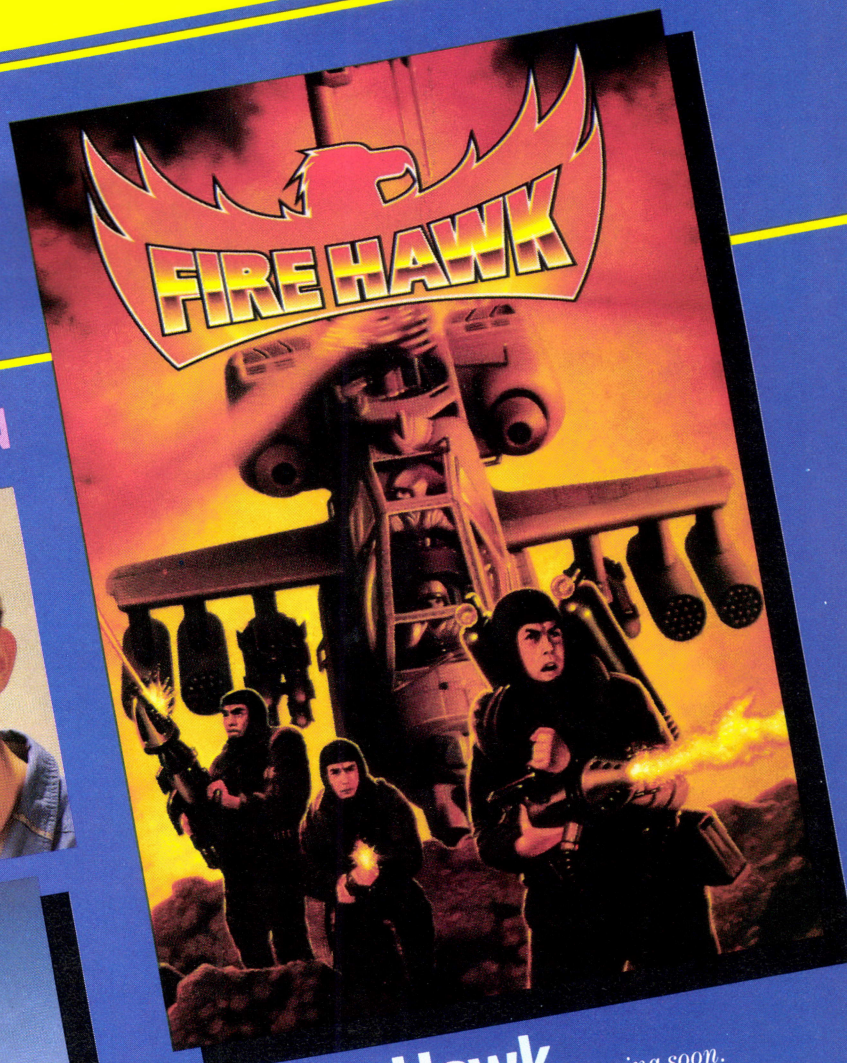
NEW

Introducing MIG-29 and Fire Hawk from Camerica Games

NINTENDO WORLD CHAMPION



"Here are two great additions for your game collection. MIG-29 is the fastest jet fighter game on any system and Fire Hawk has equal portions of strategy and adventure for a unique game experience."
–Thor Aackerlund



Fire Hawk *Coming soon.*
Experience the control and power of an advanced helicopter gunship on a series of deadly missions. Supersonic sound effects and dazzling 3D graphics!

MIG-29
The ultimate air combat game! Action, excitement, intrigue and super fast 3D graphics.

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CIRCLE #122 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

ACTION

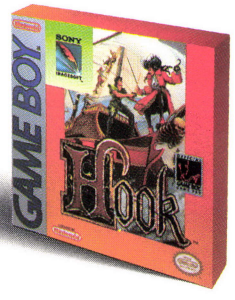
What do you want?

Finger-blistering speed? Eyeball-popping color? Total control? Gameplay so smooth you can cut it with a knife?

Well whatever it is, we've got it. And plenty of it.

Like awesome sports and incredible action/adventure games.

Check 'em out.



In Extra Innings, our newest hit for the 16-bit, you call the shots and control all the action: the starting lineup, your batter's slugging power, the spin on the curve ball, even your player's dive for a shot up the middle.

With Soccer Mania, for GameBoy, you take the field against six of the world's toughest teams. Then it's your job to kick, pass and dribble your way to the world cup championship.

On the action/adventure front, for NES and GameBoy, both Hook and Hudson Hawk will

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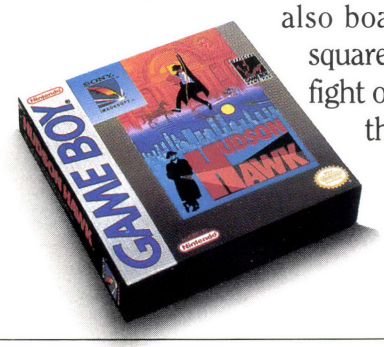
PACKED!

get your blood pumping.

In Hook, you not only do battle as Peter Pan with the pirates and creatures of Neverland, you also board Hook's ship and square off in a duel for the fight of your life. (It's a good thing you can fly!)



Hudson Hawk puts you in the shoes of the world's most famous cat-burglar. As The Hawk, you have to outsmart world-class criminals and sneak through traps, tunnels and airshafts to steal the secret device that will save the world from ruin.

And in SmartBall you'll enter the wackiest worlds imaginable, as you change your shape and slip, slide, slither and ooze your way through steamy tropics and urban battlezones.

So check out these action-packed games from Sony Imagesoft.

If it's action you want, we've got it.

SONY
IMAGESOFT™

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CIRCLE #120 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

The Conque
FOR THE
GENESIS

st of Cron

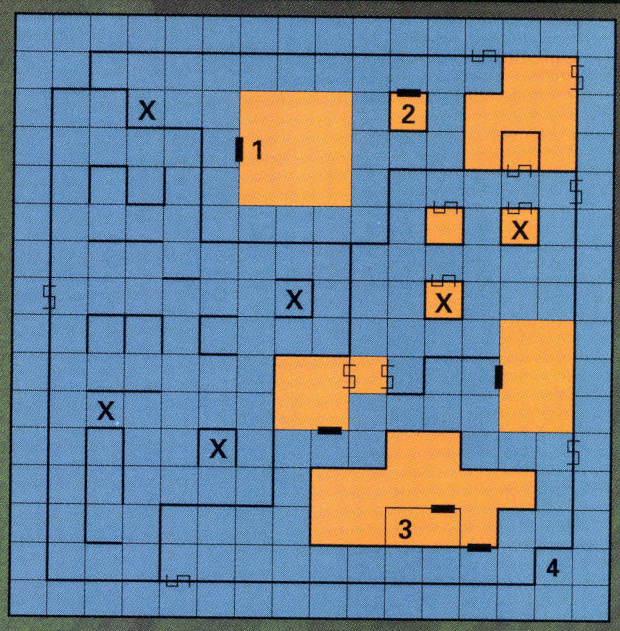
PART 3

A Player's Guide to Might & Magic

All set for our third journey into the exciting world of Cron? On this part of our quest, we'll explore the hallways of several caverns, the wildernesses of some new regions and even take a vacation at a mysterious resort. Get your adventuring supplies together, because the quest starts now!

BY CLAYTON WALNUM

ILLUSTRATION BY MARCUS HUEBNER



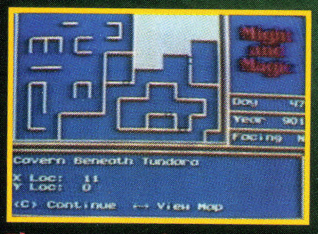
Tundara Cavern

1. Frozen Cadavers
2. Red Lever
3. Set Magic Location
4. Exit

▌ = Door

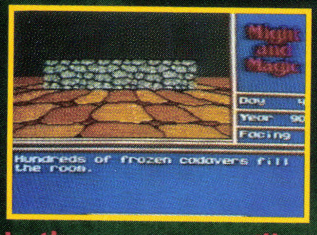
$ = Secret door

X = Message on wall



The cavern beneath Tundara contains a wealth of hints, but...

...it's a confusing labyrinth that requires much exploring.

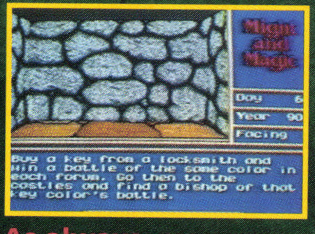


In the cavern, you'll discover what happened to many of the townspeople.

Odd devices require experimentation.

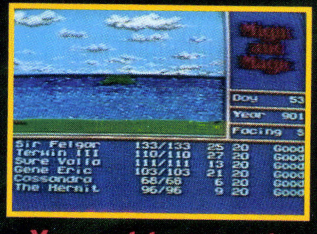
Atlantium Cavern contains many twisty passages.

It also contains its share of angry monsters.



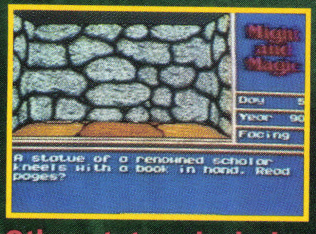
As always, messages on the walls give you important clues to the solution of the game.

...poof!...

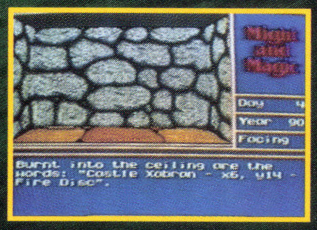


...You get transported instantly to this location, which is...

...filled with powerful creatures.

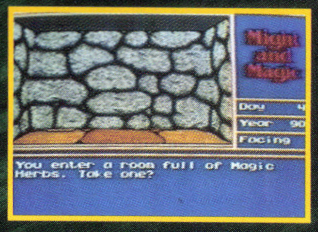


Other statues include this one of a scholar...

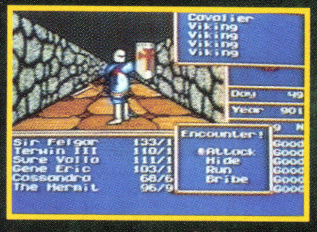


On the walls and ceiling of this cavern are messages telling you where you can acquire valuable objects.

You'll need to search for hidden doors, or maybe you can use a teleport spell to get you into hidden rooms.

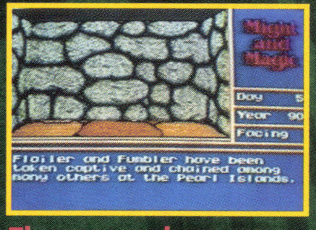


In some rooms, you'll find handy supplies.

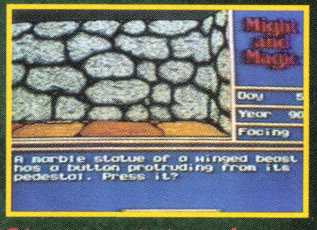


For a reasonably strong party, many foes in this dungeon aren't too hard to beat, but...

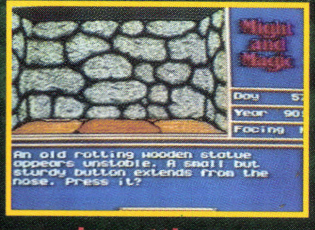
...you're bound to run into some long battles.



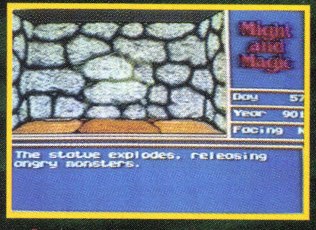
There are also a couple of hirelings in this cavern.



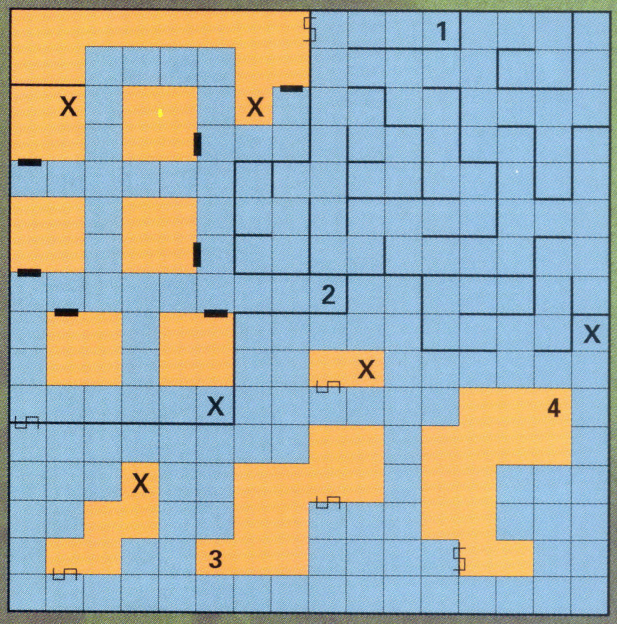
Strange statues here can lead to danger. For example, if you press the button on this statue...

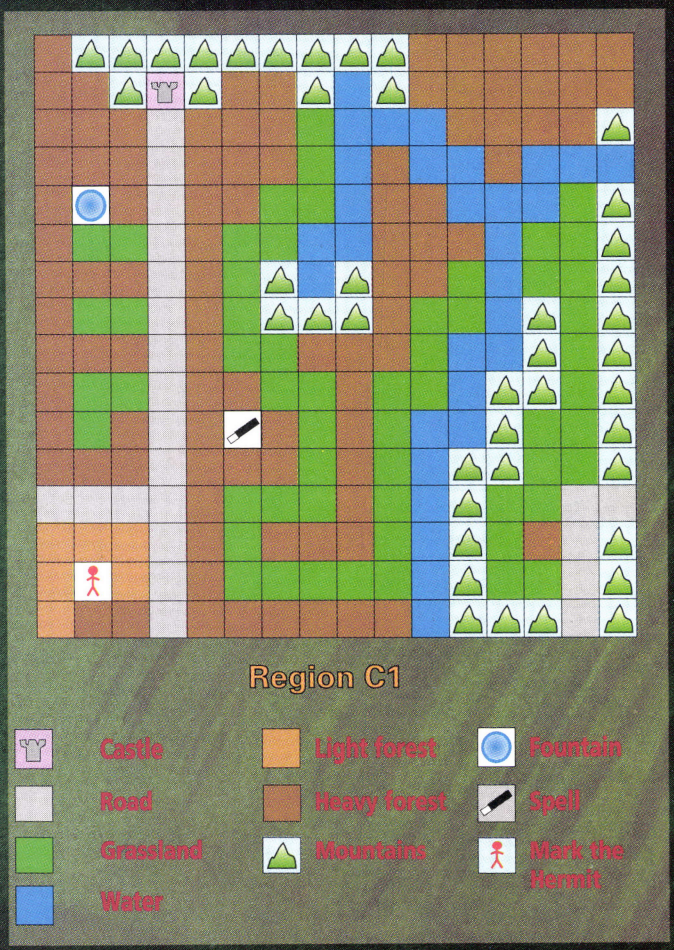


...and a rotting wooden statue, which, when monkeyed with...



...leaves you facing a horde of almost unbeatable foes.





Region C1, located north of Middlegate, is a great place for clerics to exercise their powers. The undead are everywhere!

The ghosts are particularly nasty, since they are difficult to attack with magic, but...

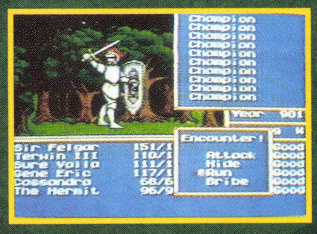
...the Moon Ray spell can do them in.

Ghouls are much easier to beat than ghosts.

Look everywhere in this region. You don't want to miss finding the Holy Word spell.

Castle Woodhaven is a major landmark in region C1, but...

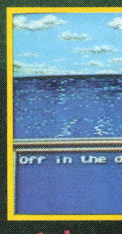
...without the proper key, you'll have a tough time getting past the gates.



In region C3, you'll face some tough enemies.

Strange stones in this area are marked with mystic symbols.

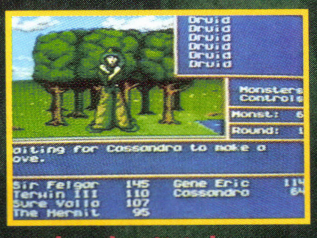
...the ticket agent will take your gold and...



...take a Cron...

Barbarians are particularly tough to beat, since they aren't easily affected by magic.

This region is controlled mostly by the local druids...



...who don't take kindly to strangers.

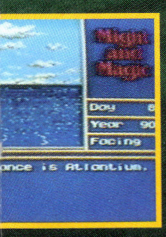
Trees, too, are marked with unusual writings.

Could the password for the Megalithic Stones have something to do with the mystic symbols on the other stones?

You'll find Murray's boat ride in region C3, but you must first buy a ticket in Middlegate, where...

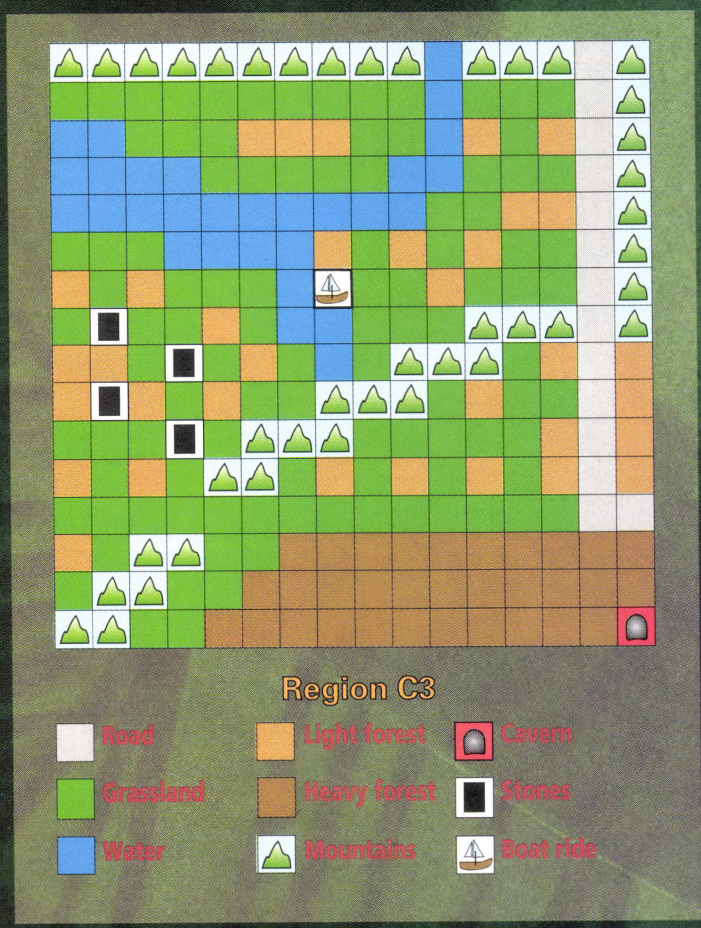
...tell you where to get on board.

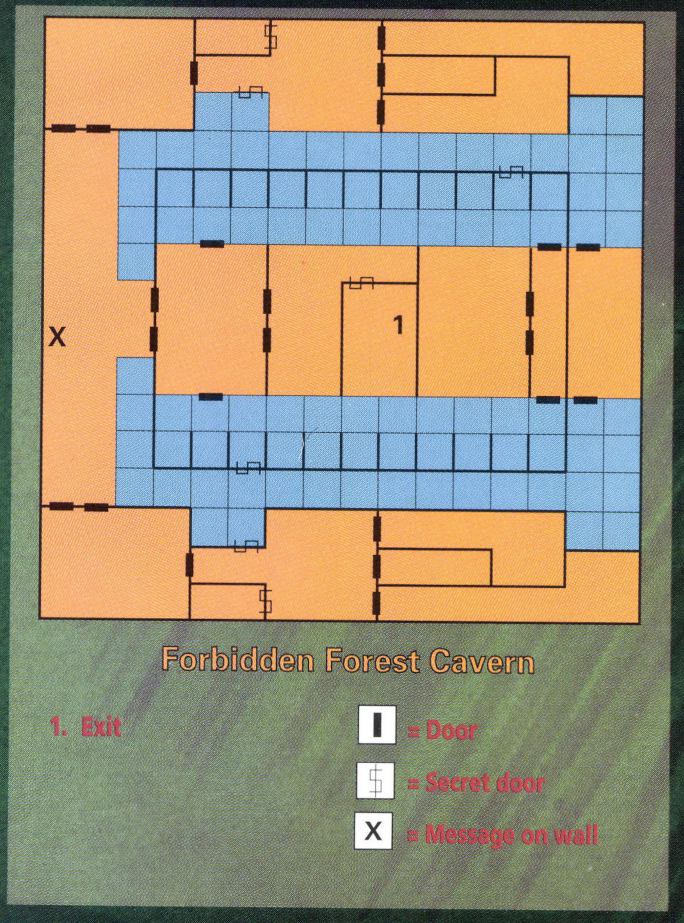
With your ticket in hand, you can hop on Murray's boat and...

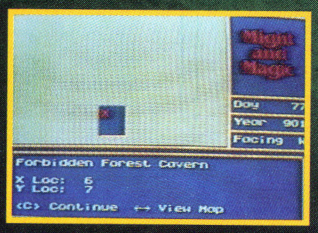


rief tour of

...which will end at Murray's Resort Isle, a place filled with pleasure and danger.







You'll find the Forbidden Forest Cavern in the southeast corner of region C3.

Forbidden Forest Cavern is a stronghold, loaded with all types of soldiers.

Some of the soldiers are tough to beat...

...but some of the rooms...

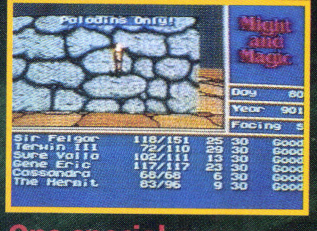
...contain dozens of creatures...

...that are easy to beat, as long as...

...you have the time to find them all!

Murray's quarters are off-limits, and...

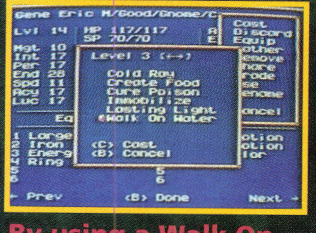
...if you try to enter,



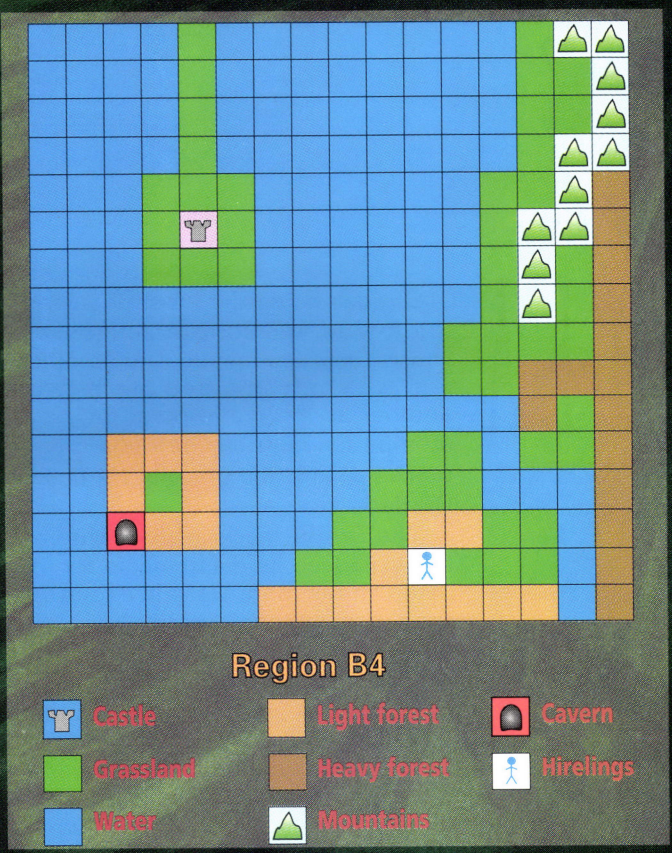
One special room can be entered only by Paladins, and...

...if you don't take the warning seriously...

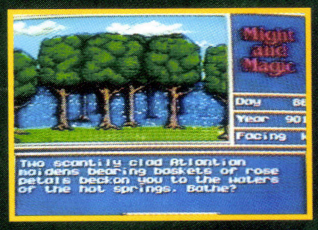
...you may live (or die) to regret it.



By using a Walk On Water spell...



Murray's boat ride, which you can board in region C3, takes you to region B4.



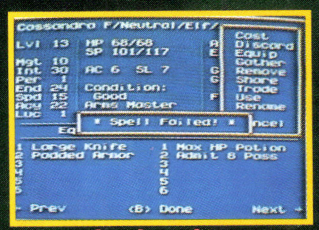
The boat will drop you off at Murray's Resort Isle, where you can take hot baths and...

...soak in specially prepared mud. But not every attraction on this isle is safe.

Murray's cave is located on the resort isle. This cave contains some interesting secrets and some strong monsters. Watch your step!

you'd better have your swords sharpened!

Look on walls for important clues.

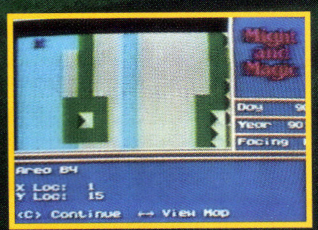


It can be hard to get where you want to go in Murray's cave, because spells like Teleport and Lloyd's Beacon don't work here.

In other areas of region B4, you'll find a couple of hirelings.

On a long peninsula, you'll come across this mysterious castle, but...

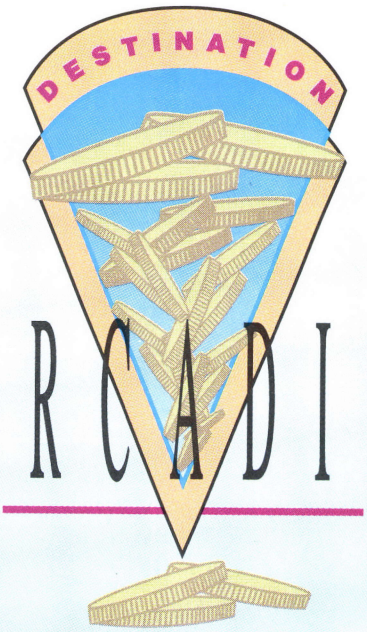
...only sorcerers can enter.



...you can explore this region's large ocean.

But watch out that you don't lose too many gems in the water.

Lots of other mysteries await you in the rest of this huge adventure game. Good luck, and happy adventuring!



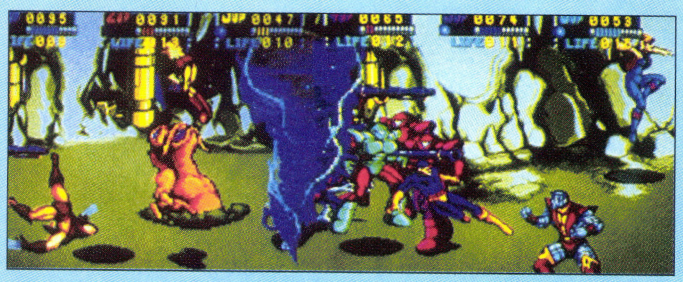
X-Men

KONAMI

Forget Russia against Napoleon, the Axis powers vs. the Allies or J.R. Ewing vs. Cliff Barnes. The battle of mankind vs. Marvel Comics' mutantkind is the one that will truly shatter the world. But mutantkind must learn to get along first, as demonstrated by the X-Men and the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants who continually fight over the fate of humanity. Villainous Magneto believes that normal humans should be obliterated, while the X-Men fight for peaceful coexistence. Hoping to crush the heroes' spirit, Magneto kidnaps the X-Men's leader, the wheelchair-bound Professor X.

Four- and six-player versions of this arcade game allow players to select one of six X-Men: Cyclops, Storm, Wolverine, Colossus, Nightcrawler or Dazzler. Each hero is controlled by a joystick and three buttons: jump, attack and their individual mutant superpower, which may be used more often as they defeat more super-villains. An attack may be a kick, punch, flip or other maneuver, depending on distance from other foes.

Visually and plotwise the game resembles the *X-Men* television show more than the comic book, which is why the characters are so cleanly drawn and impressive in combat. Attempting to be more than a nonstop string of battles, *X-Men* has animated intermission sequences and periodic speeches from Professor X, who provides plenty of encouragement, but little actual help. The battlefield changes from city street to lava-filled volcanic caves to Magneto's asteroid base. Among *X-Men*'s other achievements is the side-by-side pair of monitors that composes the picture with only a barely noticeable crack showing between them. The action is thus spread out over a large enough surface to prevent those playing the ends from wrenching their necks, a common flaw of multiperson games.



With characters so cleanly drawn, Konami's *X-Men* will remind you of the television show, filled with combat and animated sequences.

Besides being the most popular of the X-Men, the six characters were chosen because they looked so different. No confusing one player with another as the metal giant Colossus stomps through the battlefield contrasted against the graceful yet deadly Dazzler.

The Brotherhood of Evil Mutants has expanded its membership for this battle and is more visually interesting than the heroes, while having a greater diversity of strategies in combat. And, for added effect, all make speeches that are perfectly in character: The flamethrowing Pyro is as malicious as the mammoth Blob is inarticulate and slothful. Konami's most impressive feat was the inclusion of Mystique, an illusionist fond of imitating both other super-villains and the people the X-Men are trying to rescue. But nothing beats the white-fur-covered Wendigo, whose claws are matched in effect by its sinister, hissing voice.

If *X-Men* has one flaw, it is the same one that all simulations of Marvel's Mutants possess: Like any good superhero team, the X-Men's superpowers are vastly different from one another and have varying effectiveness in combat. Therefore, they should not be presented as equivalent. Sure, Storm's miniature tornadoes and Colossus' Incredible-Hulk-style ground poundings don't look the same, but they have almost identical effects—destroyed robots, dead killer bats, dissolved acid-spitting slug creatures and injured super-villains.

X-Men may not be as faithful to the comic book as Data East's *Captain America and the Avengers*, but it is a welcome addition to the growing number of superhero stand-alones. Now if only some company would have the courage to bring the even more diverse Fantastic Four to life.

—David Moskowitz

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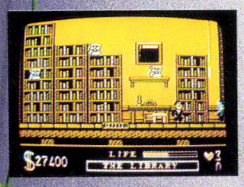
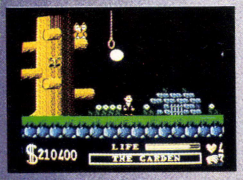
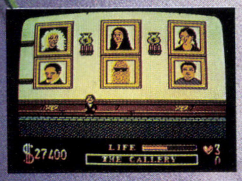
The Addams Family™

Morticia has been kidnapped!

Kidnappers have hidden Morticia somewhere in the scary Addams Mansion. You and Gomez have to escape hidden traps, and battle scary ghouls and goblins on your search to find her. Collect the million dollar ransom, find Wednesday, Pugsley and the rest of the family in your attempt to rescue the beloved Morticia.







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Nintendo ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM®

SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

The name of the game

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GAME BOY

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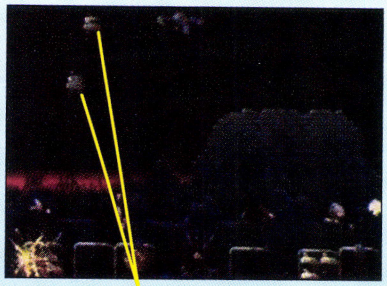
CIRCLE #144 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

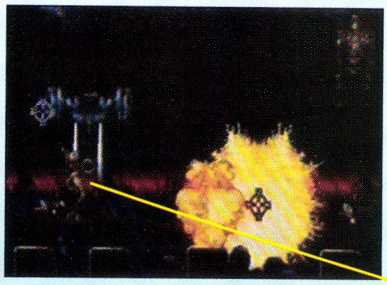
Terminating the T-1000 in T2: Judgment Day

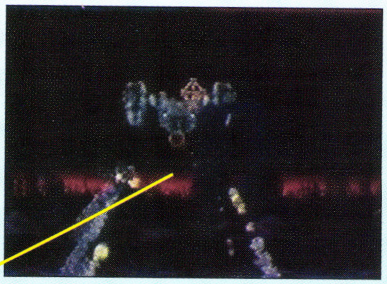
T2: Judgment Day is an extremely difficult game, with a plot that exceeds that of the motion picture. This pictorial hint guide will help you get through the game and show you how to get extra points and secret power-ups. A special thanks goes out to Roger Sharpe and the gang at Williams for providing us with this very useful information.

—Mike Davila



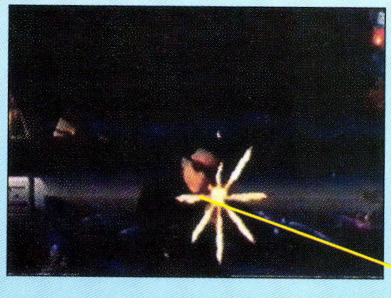
You can steal the other player's power-ups by shooting at them when they are flying to your opponent's score area.

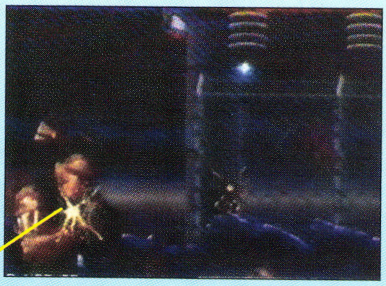




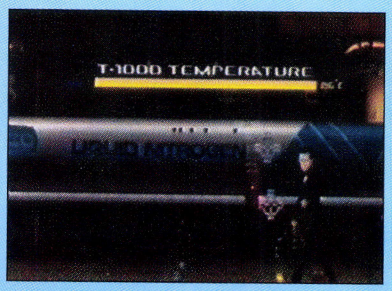
Try not to waste any rockets on flying HKs (Hunter Killers) when they are far away. Wait until they are close and then shoot them with bullets. They can be destroyed with as few as three bullets.

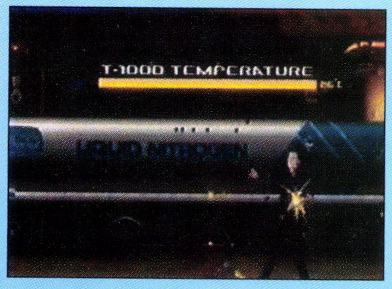
At Skynet, shoot at everything. You get big bonus points by doing so.

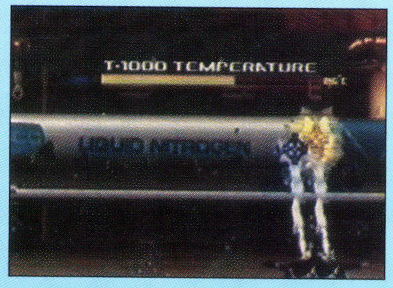




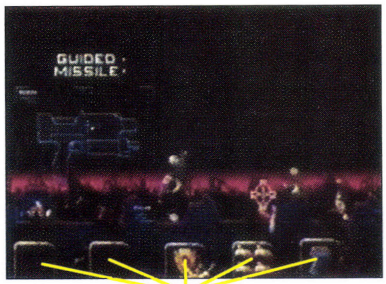
Shoot the "in your face" endoskeleton in the head ten times. By doing so, you might shake loose his CPU chip. Shoot at this chip before it hits the ground and you will get a Random Feature or points (e.g., 100,000 or 500,000 points, extra power, ten rockets, smart bomb, shield and full recharge).



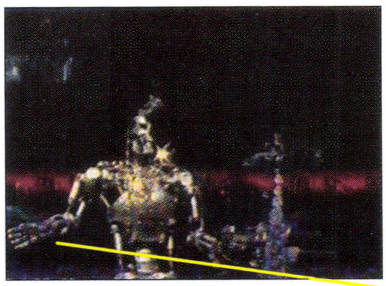


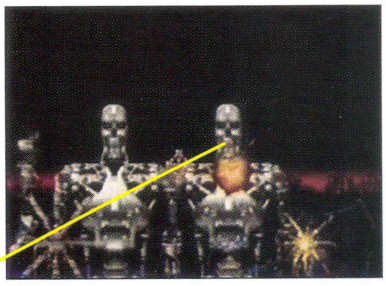


Knock the T-1000 to the ground, then let him have it with the liquid nitrogen. He is more vulnerable to damage when knocked down.

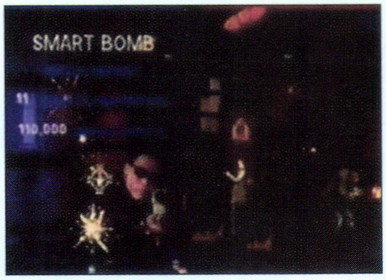


First off, make sure that you shoot open all the weapon crates that are scattered throughout each of the missions to get extra power-ups.





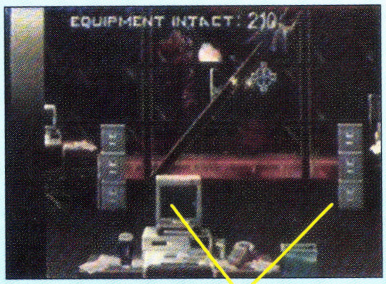
The arms and heads of the T-800 endoskeletons can be shot off. You receive more points by killing them this way, and if you leave just a pair of legs, you get a 10x bonus.



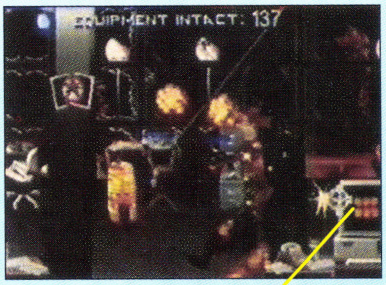
Once inside the Human Hideout, shoot at the light fixtures and crates. They hold different types of power-ups. Also, remember that just about everything can be destroyed.

Get the pickup truck safely to Skynet in the first try.

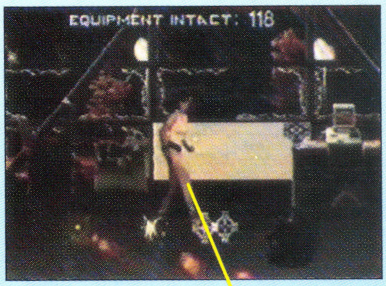
If you succeed, you will get a 500,000-point Super Truck Bonus.



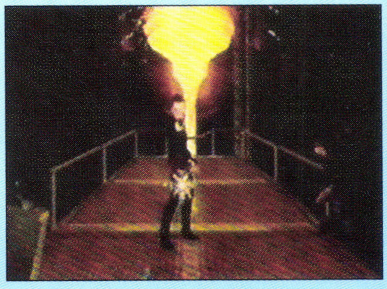
When you get to Cyberdyne Systems, get the Equipment Intact counter down to zero by destroying objects that retain information (e.g., computers, file cabinets, etc.).



Shoot at any computer displaying graphics on its screen. Doing so may dislodge its CPU, giving you the Random Feature.



Remember! Don't shoot at humans who don't shoot at you. They'll help you on your missions, and, if they get hit, bonus points will be subtracted from your score.



In order to deliver the final blow to the T-1000 at the steel mill, you must use the M-79 grenade launcher. Remember how Arnold did it in the movie?

RAC
Canon
Canon
Canon
elf
7
CASTILLO
GOODYEAR
Marlboro
FUJI
7UP

LNG

down the

ELECTRONIC ROAD RALLY

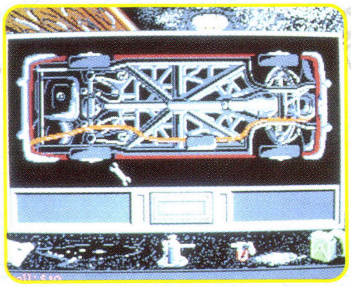
A Survey of Driving Simulations

If it's a vehicle that can be or has been conceived by the mind of man, chances are it's been a simulation for computer or video-game systems. You can drive through the streets of a major American city, compete in the Grand Prix or race a futuristic hovercraft on another planet. Driving games continue to be one of the most popular categories in the gaming pantheon. So let's cruise down memory lane for the past 12 months and see what new additions have been added to the genre since we last covered this subject in the March 1991 issue of VG&CE.

The easiest way to get a sense of the different driving-oriented software is to divide our coverage into sections, starting with the most popular categories and moving on down.

Gentlemen, Start Your Engines!

The most popular form of driving game, of course, is the racing contest. This year saw several sequels and even revivals of older classics, in addition to a few original products.



Street Rod 2: The Next Generation (California Dreams) follows in the tradition of the *Hot Rod* and *Street Rod* games from California Dreams. This latest entry offers improved graphics and an added layer of strategic challenge. Players start out low on cash, with the more generic cars—a Ford Fairlane or Falcoln—but continued success earns sufficient money to eventually trade up to a Vette or Shelby GT500. Cash is accumulated by winning races and selling off old auto parts. Then the racing starts, down Mulholland Drive or through the famous L.A. Aqueduct. The game includes over 25 cars and 60 different spare parts and offers the finest graphics yet in this series.

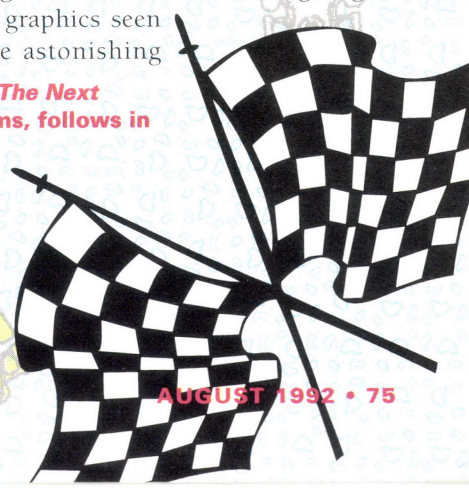
Top: *Bill Elliott's NASCAR Challenge.* Bottom: *Mario Andretti's Racing Challenge.*

Bill Elliott's NASCAR Challenge, a popular computer game last year, has now made the transition to the NES and Game Boy. The first great stock car racing simulation made the transition to the new systems in great form, losing almost nothing in the translation.

Mario Andretti's Racing Challenge (Electronic Arts) is the long-awaited follow-up to the first two *Test Drive* games, which were created by Distinctive Software Inc. Then DSI moved from Accolade to EA, and this ambitious, if imperfect, project is the first result of the new collaboration. The game's strong point is its great flexibility, with the user able to race sprint cars, modifieds, stock cars, prototype vehicles, Formula One or Indy-style machines.

Road & Track Presents: Grand Prix Unlimited (Accolade) celebrates Accolade's new partnership with *Road & Track* magazine. The result is a game, created by Tom Loughry, with both a solid Grand Prix simulator and a user-friendly course architect that enables gamers to design their own tracks. The program and graphics include customized car performances and equipment setups, as well as the next generation of the stunning, digitized graphics seen in the astonishing

Top and bottom: *Street Rod 2: The Next Generation*, by California Dreams, follows in the tradition of their *Hot Rod* and *Street Rod* games.



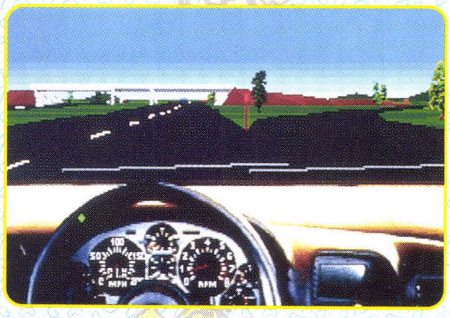
By Bill Kunkel and Joyce Worley

***Road & Track Presents: Grand Prix Unlimited*, by Accolade, enables gamers to design their own tracks.**

Test Drive III: The Passion (Acco-lade), also by Tom Loughry.

Road & Car #1, the first add-on disk for the third *Test Drive*, is also available. Players will now be allowed to tool down the scenarios from *TD III* in a Chevrolet CERV III, Lambor-ghini Diablo or Ferrari Pinin-farina Mythos.

Race America, the latest from Absolute Entertainment, home of the legendary Kitchen Brothers, is a coast-to-coast racing simulation that really stretches the 8-bit envelope, with split-screen views, one- or two-player options, a roster of ranked computer opponents and some unusual visual perspectives or camera angles. The nine-leg race moves through Boston, New York, Washington, D.C., Cincinnati, Detroit, Chicago, Kansas City, Dallas and Denver.



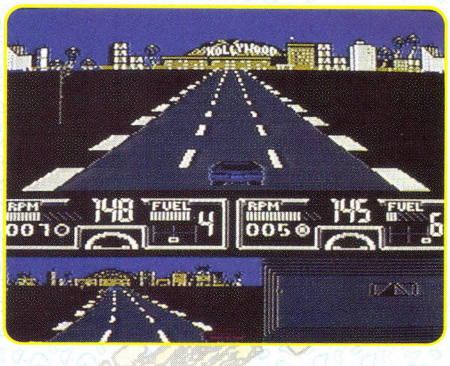
A driver's-eye view from *Test Drive III: The Passion*, by Accolade.

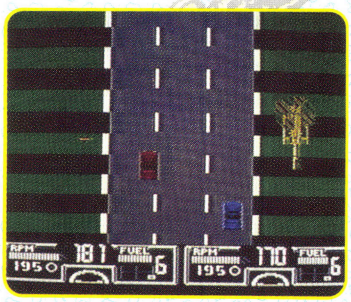
Ferrari Grand Prix Challenge from Acclaim, for both the NES and Game Boy, presents gamers with a through-the-windshield perspective. Speeds top 260 miles per hour, there are interactive pit stops and 16 international tracks in the NES version, while the GB software offers a 16-race format and a choice of five Ferraris.

One of the more high-toned entries into the racing sweepstakes is Electronic Arts' *Car & Driver*, a high-res, fast 3-D code, two-player racing simulation with modem and networking capabilities. Using the resources of *Car & Driver* magazine, the designers created ten different roadways modeled after USGS data and sophisticated physics modeling. Available cars include: Chevy Corvette ZR1, Ferrari F40, Eagle Talon, Toyota MR2, Porsche 959, Shelby Cobra, Ferrari 1957 Testarossa, Lotus Esprit Turbo, Mercedes C11 IMSA prototype and the Lamborghini Countach.

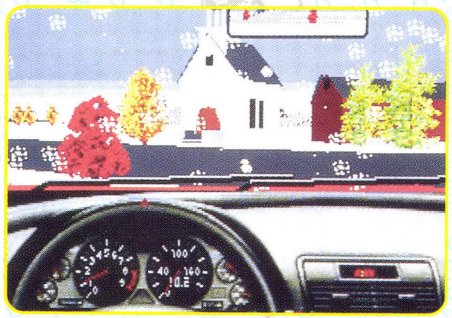
Ferrari Grand Prix is now available for the Genesis from Flying Edge and offers users 16 courses. Meanwhile, the cult classic, radio-controlled auto racing simulation, *R.C. Grand Prix*, is also Genesis-bound, courtesy of Absolute Entertainment.

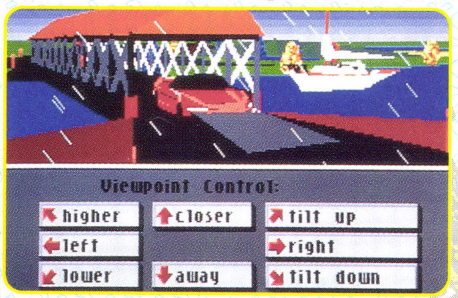
Traditionalists will want to check out *World Circuit* from MicroProse, a Grand Prix simulation that takes racers from Phoenix to Monza, Mexico City, Barcelona and a dozen other race locations. The graphics are stunning, and the game has several excellent features, including the ability to modify your car, replay dramatic scenes from several camera angles and view special awards ceremonies. There are even variable difficulty settings.





***Race America*, from Absolute Entertainment, features unusual visual perspectives.**





Reactionaries can always return to those thrilling days of yesteryear for yet another go at the venerable, if slightly arthritic, *Outrun* from Sega for the Genesis. It looks nice, rendered in Sega's beautiful 16-bit system, but the question of how many people still want to play this classic has yet to be answered.

Handheld Hot-Rodding

The handheld end of the gaming industry—Game Boy (Nintendo), Game Gear (Sega) and Lynx (Atari)—has also hopped into the front seat of automania. We've already made mention of several Game Boy entries, and here are some of the other available handheld hot-rodders.

Far left: *Ferrari Grand Prix Challenge*, by Acclaim, for the NES. Top and left: *Road & Car #1*, the first add-on disk for *Test Drive III*.

WIN! The Ultimate Gaming Rig!!

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OVER $18,000.00 IN PRIZES!

You have the POWER. In this contest you don't rely on the luck-of-the draw. You determine if you win or not. You win by outscoring others in a game of skill. Can you solve the puzzle below? Then you have what it takes. It looks simple, but it's only the start. Each of five more puzzles gets a little harder. But this time it's all up to you. Stay in to the end with the highest score and the gear is yours. With whatever options you want. Do you have what it takes? Then play to win!

Video Game Contest. Play any 16-bit game in the world with this line-up. Neo Geo Gold, Super NES, Sega Genesis and TurboGrafx-16. Get all four or trade the ones you don't want for CA$H! Bonus options include: 33" monitor, $1,000 in games, cash, accessories and more!

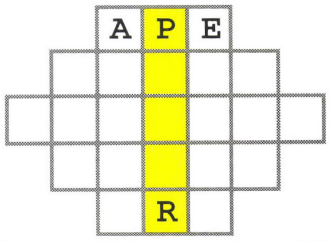
Media Rig Contest. The Ultimate Gaming Environment, 40 inch monitor, 130 watt receiver w/ Dolby Pro Logic Surround Sound, Infinity speakers, subwoofer, CD player, graphic EQ, dual cassette and Hi-Fi VCR. This rig will blow you away (literally!)!! You'll not only see but feel it too!

We're talkin' GAMING HEAVEN!

Directions. Fill in the Mystery Word Grid with words going across that spell out the Mystery Word down the middle. Hint: use the Mystery Word Clue.

In the future. There will be four more puzzles at $2.00 each and one tie-breaker at $1.50 which will be sent to you by mail. You will have 3 weeks to solve each puzzle. We don't know how many will play but typically 47% will have the highest score possible score to Phase I, 30% to Phase II, 25% to Phase III, and 20% to Phase IV. The tie-breaker determines the winner. If players are still tied they will split the value of the prizes.

Mystery Word Grid



WORD LIST

QUEST	SUM	DREAM	HAT	WINGS
ONE	TURBO	GET	STORM	ART
INVADER	THUNDER	MUTANTS	CRAWLER	INDIANA
NINJA	FOR	CHASE	ASK	TOWER
FIT	MICRO	APE	RANGE	ACE

MYSTERY WORD CLUE: World rulers have it, it comes out of an outlet and in this contest you have it!

Yes! ENTER ME TODAY, HERE'S MY ENTREE FEE:

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CIRCLE #123 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

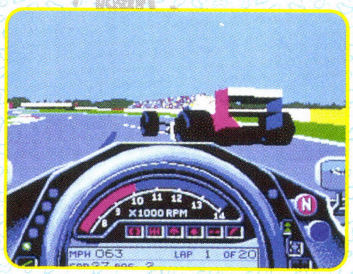
Top, left and right: The cult classic auto racing simulation *R.C. Grand Prix* is Genesis-bound, courtesy of Absolute Entertainment. Bottom, left and right: Traditionalists will want to check out *World Circuit* from MicroProse.

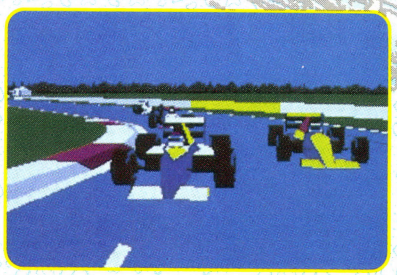
Super Grand Prix (Sega), a beautiful translation of the classic Genesis game, is available on the Game Gear, while the Lynx has added *Checkered Flag*, an extremely impressive Formula One simulation. This supplements its earlier release of the Atari coin-op cult fave *Road Blasters*. *Checkered Flag* allows players to control the tracks, difficulty, number and colors of cars, transmission and even the driver's gender. Eighteen different tracks are included, along with a wide variety of handicapping features.

In addition to the Game Boy driving titles mentioned earlier, keep your eyes pealed for a well-executed version of the popular *Super Off-Road* from Virgin, based on the hit coin-op. This is a driving game with one of the most confused lineages imaginable: The Game Boy and computer versions were done by Virgin; the Genesis game is from Accolade; and Tradewest is responsible for the Super NES. In virtually all forms, this arcadelike contest, in which drivers steer tiny cars over terrained scenery viewed from a three-quarter perspective, is a top finisher.

The Unusual and Exotic

Offbeat driving games have become more and more popular in recent years, as have games that utilize driving as a single segment of a multi-event contest.





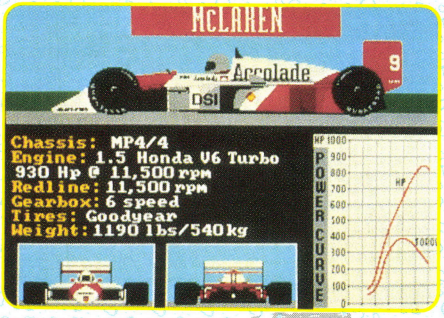
Capstone produced one of the more interesting omnibus auto collections with *Super Car Pack*, a boxed set containing several popular software titles that all fit within the driving and auto-buff genres. *Super Car Pack* includes Capstone's own *Exotic Car Show-room*, a sort of computerized car magazine with VGA photos of some of the hottest gas eaters around. Also included in the package are Accolade's *Grand Prix Circuit* and Electronic Art's *Ferrari Formula One*.

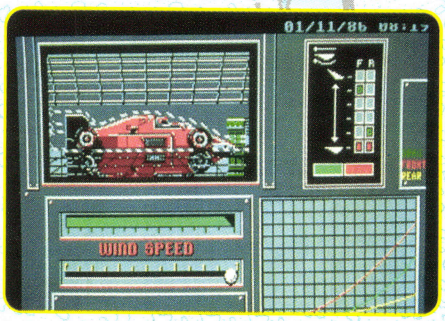
On a smaller, but no less significant, note, Camerica's *Micro Machines* certainly provides one of the more innovative racing games available, as tiny vehicles race around the breakfast table at breakneck speed, avoiding spoons, napkins and breakfast bowls with practiced ease—all depicted in top/down perspective.

The Ultimate Stuntman, while only partially a driving game, deserves mention because its driving sequences are pretty sharp. The plot has the world's greatest stuntman rescuing a beautiful woman who has been snatched by loathsome baddies. Now *where* have I heard *that* before?

Another game that uses driving as an element of the overall play mechanic is the excellent *Police Quest III: The Kindred* (Sierra On-Line). This one is visually and aurally impressive from the word go, with the user given a chilling insight into the experience of being a police officer. Driving sequences fit into the game, but they are not crucial to it.

Futuristic driving games have always been a popular idea, and Nintendo's *F-Zero* for the Super NES is one of the most successful ever. Up to a quartet of proton-powered hovercars steer around a racetrack





Top and above: Accolade's *Grand Prix Circuit* is included in Capstone's *Super Car Pack*, a boxed set containing several popular software titles. Far left and left: Based on the hit coin-op, *Super Off-Road* comes to the Genesis from Accolade.

whose gravity may or may not be exactly the same as Earth's. Traveling at speeds of 500 m.p.h., this "bumper car track" can rattle your teeth pretty good. Speed-up curves, the ability to redesign the basic layout of the vehicle and obstacles such as underground explosives help keep things hopping.

Other offbeat games that involve driving at least superficially include *Wild Wheels* (Ocean), a game in which vehicles play football, and *Hyperspeed* (MicroProse), an alien combat/RPG in which the adventurer moves through space in a hovercar.

Above: *Wild Wheels*, by Ocean. Below: *Road Blasters*, by Sega. Below, right: *Team Suzuki*, by Konami.

Born to be Wild

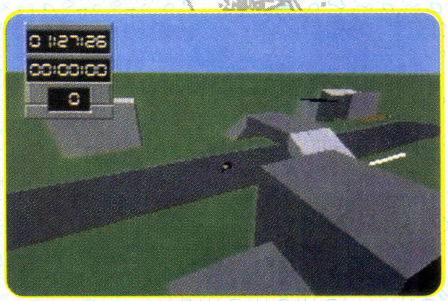
The mystique of the motorcycle has exerted a powerful influence over both the rebels and the conformists in our society. The meek conformists secretly wish they could feel all that power, then blast off in an explosion of smoke, popping a wheelie and laughing like a maniac.

These days, of course, white-collar businessmen employed by bosses who idolize Malcolm Forbes take up more of the highway on their Harley-Davidsons than the Hell's Angels ever did. So if you feel the highways have been taken over, then you might enjoy some of the motorcycle video games that have debuted in the past year.

The most outstanding is *Road Rash* from Electronic Arts, a chillingly realistic road race in which cyclers can kick, punch and do just about anything to keep the opposition out of the race. The graphics in this kung fu/motorcycle game are superb, with the animations both effective and realistic (if you get knocked off your bike and the vehicle is dragged out on the road, don't be surprised to see a trailer appear and drag it another 40 feet down the road). As players win races, they can trade up to superior choppers.

One of the other two major new motorcycle games to appear in the past year is Konami's *Team Suzuki*, one of the most visually impressive racing games ever produced. Players select among three classes of Suzuki bike (125cc, 250cc and 500cc) with four game play modes (practice, training, single race, and 16-race Grand Prix season). There are six camera angles, including rider view, grandstand and helicopter perspectives, 32 Grand Prix racing tracks (two sets for two seasons) and a save game feature. An impressive product, to say the least.

The final new entry into the chopper sweepstakes is *Riding Hero*, the ridiculously titled Neo•Geo 42-megabyte, two-player contest in which a lone cycle races over a variety of terrains. The cyclist can compete in the Grand Prix or even engage in what SNK lists as "Role-Playing or Multi-Link" modes. No details are available, but, if true, this has to be the first role-playing arcade driving game in history!



In a Nutshell

As we've seen, driving games just keep on coming, in all shapes and sizes and with all sorts of wild ideas attached. And, with any luck, we'll keep on moving in just that direction! Burn rubber, you crazies!

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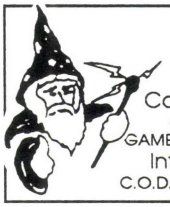
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GAMING GOES A-COURTING

BY
ARNIE KATZ

Writer, editor, lecturer and game designer Arnie Katz knows the field from every perspective. Each month, his column takes readers inside the world of video and computer games. This month, Arnie examines three headline-making court cases.

Three landmark judicial decisions handed down in April are going to have a tremendous effect on the direction electronic gaming takes during the balance of the century's final decade. Prefacing my remarks with the reminder that I'm a journalist, not a lawyer, I want to explain what's happened in the courtrooms before it hits the game rooms.

The case that drew the biggest headlines involved Apple and Microsoft. Contrary to the expectations of many, Bill Gates' outfit successfully defended its *Windows* interface against charges by Apple that the program infringed on its celebrated Macintosh desktop.

Speculations run wild about why Apple brought the suit in the first place, but the prevailing opinion brands it an attempt to keep hard-charging Microsoft from dominating the entire home computer field, including Apple and IBM. An Apple victory would have enriched that couple with a fat royalty and diverted Microsoft resources to satisfy any unfavorable judicial levy against it.

The pivotal issue was "look and feel." The court determined that the similarities between the Macintosh desktop and *Windows* resulted from an overlap of function. The best analogy is that two computer baseball games would have a lot in common because they both simulate the same objective experience. A court asked to rule on possible infringement involving two baseball titles wouldn't be swayed by the presence of nine men on a side or four bases, but an identical user interface could be a different matter.

Several software publishers, mostly outside the game segment of the business, have won suits based on "look and feel," but major decisions like the Apple-Microsoft case will surely weaken this argument for any future legal confrontations.

A more concrete consequence of this decision is that it places extra pressure on Apple and IBM to put extra muscle into their previously announced joint venture. This project is intended to produce a new home computer with a chip-set derived from the present IBM machines and a desktop based on the one found on the Macintosh. Reports have the new machine, plus adapter kits for existing Macintosh and IBM PC-based machines, ready by the end of 1993.

As much as the industry has prospered as a result of the de facto standardization created by the dominance of IBM and the clone manufacturers, the potential for a truly user-friendly computer can't be overestimated. Substitute an easy-to-use, intuitive interface for the clumsy MS DOS operating system and you've got a computer with mass-market potential. So anything, even a relatively unrelated court case, that pushes the two hardware giants down this road is a major event in electronic gaming.

The Accolade-Sega imbroglio has been decided at the bar of justice, but the real-world implications are not firmly settled. The aftermath of this bitterly fought case could stretch to the end of this year, unless a more conciliatory attitude takes hold.

The bone of contention was Accolade's strategy of declining to purchase a Sega Genesis third-party license while back-engineering to get around proprietary lockout chips.

The law recognizes the validity of reverse engineering, but it must be implemented under very stringent guidelines. It appears that Accolade

failed to insulate its researchers sufficiently from the materials they were trying to reinvent.

Accolade spokesmen say that losing the multimillion-dollar judgment won't plunge the company into bankruptcy. Unofficial word from the victor is that Sega of America hopes to negotiate a settlement that will preserve Accolade as a publisher and bring it into the Genesis third-party developers camp.

This spirit of cooperation, however delayed in making its appearance, is praiseworthy. It would be a shame if Sega failed to earn its just rewards, or if a top-drawer publisher like Accolade died because of legal entanglements. Gamers can only hope that people of good will on both sides of the case can reach a meeting of the minds that will preserve the Ballistic video-game software label.

I think it's fair to see the ruling as vindication of the third-party publishing system currently in use in the video-game field. Accolade's loss is likely to dissuade other publishers from going it alone without the required license.

Sega took it on the chin in the third legal battle. Violating a patent that covers moving colors around on an electronic screen will cost Sega of Japan dearly, to the tune of a $43 million settlement. (Nintendo and Atari Entertainment reportedly pay royalties on this process at the present time.)

I don't want to minimize the impact of this finding, even on such a large and robust company as Sega, but this case could be just a harbinger of things to come in 1993. The word on the industry grapevine is that patent fights have only just begun. Sierra On-Line, always a forward-looking company, now has "patent pending" notices on its new games. According to Ken Williams, the company seeks to protect certain software routines, such as the "intelligent avoider" program, from companies that have incorporated it (and other codes Sierra has developed) into their own interactive graphics adventures based on Sierra titles like the *King's Quest* and *Space Quest* series.

Sierra's actions have the rest of the computer entertainment business reexamining their own proprietary code and program technology. Although Sierra hasn't yet received any of the patents for which it has applied, that won't stop other companies from trying to protect their work in the same fashion. A lot of judges are going to have to get computer literate in a hurry, or the next wave of decisions may warp electronic gaming beyond recognition. Patent rulings could play a big role in establishing the industry pecking order for the balance of the decade.

There's nothing left to say but "good night." It is with deep regret that I must announce that this is the last installment of *Inside Gaming* which will carry my byline. After a long and happy association with VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT Magazine, which began with the very first issue, I am leaving to pursue some exciting electronic-gaming opportunities.

I want to take this occasion to thank you for your support and comments, which have made my job so enjoyable. And a very special thanks is due to dauntless editor Andy Eddy, whose vision and foresight allowed me over the years to have this wonderful soapbox here in VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT.

COMPUTER ILLUSTRATION BY DELORES ANDERSON

Here Comes a New Fan Activity

BY
ARNIE KATZ

Some have wondered how I come up with all these ideas for electronic-gaming fandom. It's easy. Following the time-honored tradition of professional game designers, I steal my ideas wholesale. Other fandoms (science fiction, wrestling and comics, to cite three) face similar problems, so I think it's natural to look to them for inspiration.

One worthy import may be the Amateur Press Association (APA). This caters to fans who don't want to spend the time and money to produce a general circulation fanzine. Each member (30-60 is the usual size) sends the Official Editor (OE) the required number of copies of their APA contribution. The OE makes up identical bundles and sends one to each name on the roster.

Members fill their *apa*zines with the usual mix of opinions, analyses, reviews and such, plus mailing comments. A mailing comment, invented by longtime APA participant Jack Speer, is a response to something in a previous APA mailing. Through mailing comments, *apans* exchange views and conduct paper conversations on a wide range of topics.

That's the idea behind EGAD (Electric Gaming Amateur Distribution), the first press association for fans of video and computer games. Those who'd like to get in on the ground floor of this exciting form of fan activity can send a self-addressed stamped envelope to me at the usual address and ask for EGAD information. When I get enough responses, I'll issue an organizational flier.

The Shape of Gaming to Come #5

Darren A. Krolewsk
12311 Conservation Trail
Utica, MI 48315
$5—Bimonthly
24 pages

Full-spectrum coverage of electronic gaming, a feisty staff of entertaining writers and good production values make *TSOGTC* a serious contender for number-one fanzine. An introduction to virtual reality, an examination of Commodore's ill-fated portable and a hammer-and-tongs showdown between Tim Slomka and Chris Larsen get kudos this time, and the video-game, coin-op and computer software reviews are among the best in the amateur field.

Darren is still learning the fine points of editing—a table of contents and page numbers would be a blessing in such a hefty publication—but he's clearly heading in the right direction. Darren has replaced the early-issue jitters that afflict most fanzine editors with a charming, yet incisive, editorial personality, and some of *TSOGTC*'s columnists are also growing into their roles. Send for a subscription and light up your mailbox!

Video Views #9

Ulrich Kempf
Patterson Road, RR 5, Box 212
Watertown, NY 13601
$1.50—Bimonthly
16 pages

Ulrich wrote recently to tell me that his fanzine is merging with two others previously reviewed here: *Porta Play* and *Genesis Masters*. That can only make one of the field's real standouts that much better. All three editors are already well-represented in *Video Views*, which also benefits from the contribution of Jeff Lis and Francis J. Cone.

Video Views is one of the best of the full-spectrum video-gaming fanzines. It covers all systems, with Genesis and Game Gear most in the spotlight in the current issue. The review section examines ten games, and the writing and analyses are above average for fan publications. The rating box that accompanies each review is easy to interpret and complements the text nicely.

Columns are a major part of *Video Views*. I don't always agree with the analyses, but the commentaries sure offer some original ideas. The diversity and profusion of opinions help make this a highly stimulating and informative fanzine.

Jeff's MegaSports Wire #4

Jeff Tschiltsch
22863 Hartland St.
West Hills, CA 91307
$1—Frequent
Eight pages

Anyone who publishes a fanzine as good as this one, which specializes in sports cartridges for the Lynx and Genesis, should be less shy about putting his moniker in it. Jeff Tschiltsch makes an appearance only once in eight pages, in a colophon in microscopic type. This is particularly unexpected, because, though *Jeff's MegaSports Wire* is packed with solid reviews, Jeff clearly understands the value of injecting a little personality in his fanzine. There's a back-page editorial with day-to-day details that make the editor seem more like a real person. So I hope Jeff will banish the "poser pro" JMT Enterprises name and just use his own.

And that's just about the only thing I *didn't* like about this well-produced, review-oriented fanzine. The highlight is a three-pronged critique of *Mike Ditka, Joe Montana II* and *Madden 2*.

Dreamscape #1

Frank Eva
7570 S. Manor Ave.
Oak Creek, WI 43154
$2—Frequent
Ten pages

This is the first issue of a new fanzine by an experienced writer/editor. *Dreamscape* is more tightly focused than Frank's much-respected *Hard Rock Arcade*, but the same high quality prevails. The prime topic is 16-bit video gaming, and Frank mixes a potent blend of news, reviews and well-stated opinions. The covering of the Neo•Geo is especially good, but Frank touches all the bases.

Frank is a fine example of a fan who has cracked the professional writing market, but who retains a strong interest in personal publishing. If you're a 16-bit gamer, this fanzine is highly recommended.

If you would like to see your fanzine featured in *Fandango*, send it to: *Fandango*, VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. All fanzine reviews are selected randomly.

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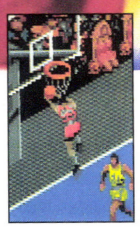
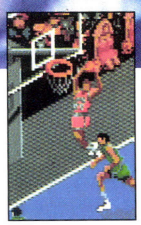


Reverse slam.

Sky hook slam.



Pile driver.

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CIRCLE #127 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

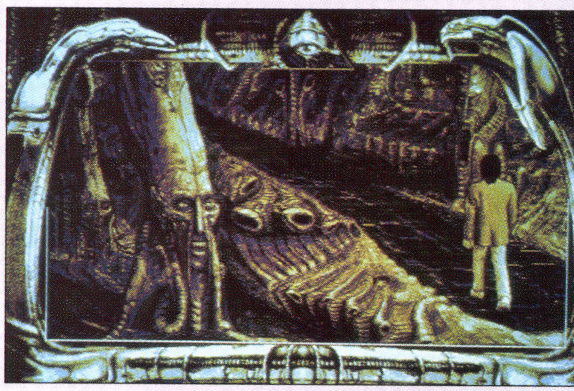
COMPUTER GAME PREVIEWS

FIRST LOOK

Darkseed

CYBERDREAMS

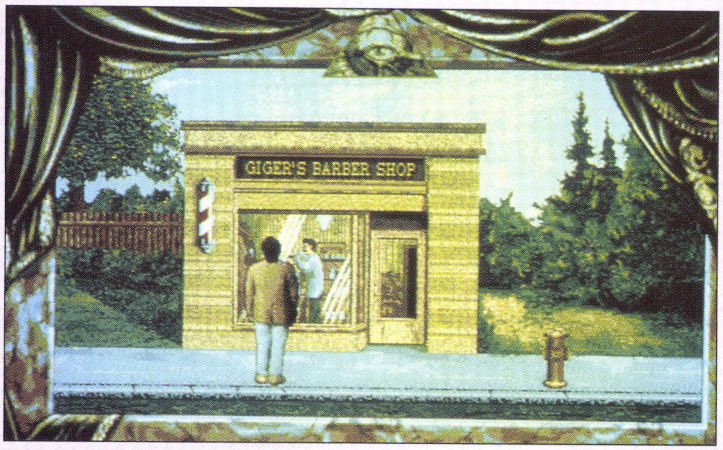
Version Previewed: IBM PC



It was inevitable that eventually a publisher would officially contract with legendary science fiction artist H.R. Giger (pronounced "gee-gur") to provide art and inspiration for a high-end computer game. Not that Gigeresque images haven't appeared in dozens of earlier games—metallic monsters mixed with snakes, skulls and concepts born in the classic horror fiction of H.P. Lovecraft. Psygnosis alone must have published a dozen games using monsters heavily influenced by the man whose art was the inspiration for the monster(s) in the *Alien* films.

Darkseed is an interesting combination of *Alien* and *D.O.A.*, told through a Sierra-like interface that features sweating, steel-skinned cybernauts instead of trolls and woodcutters. The player is cast as science fiction writer Mike Dawson, who has an alien cyber-embryo implanted in his brain during a nightmare dream sequence and now has three days before it hatches.

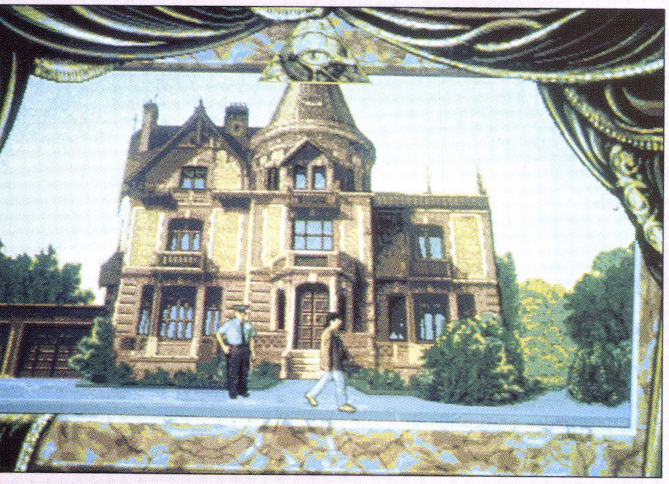
In order to save himself, he must find the access point to an underground world that exists cheek-by-cyberjowl with our own. Once he discovers the entrance point, he must deal with a battery of biomechanical monsters that need humans to reproduce.



The graphics are extremely impressive and demonstrate a strong sense of Giger's art and overall vision. (Can you imagine the *dreams* this guy must have?!)

Darkseed also comes in one of the most impressive packages seen in the software business since the days when Infocom drove retailers mad with its highly unconventional game boxes.

—Bill Kunkel



Cyberdreams' *Darkseed* took over six man-years to complete and includes the work of surrealist H.R. Giger, whose art was the inspiration for the monster in the motion picture *Alien*.

Lords of Time

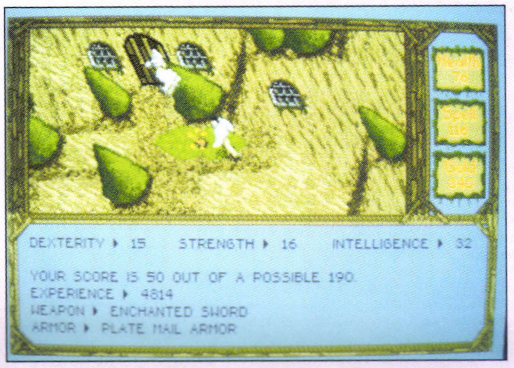
HOLLYWARE

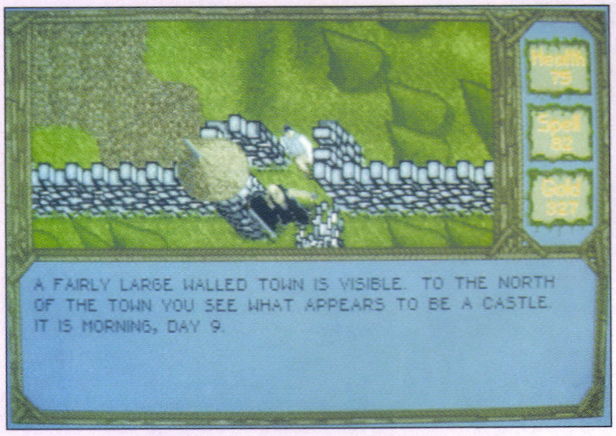
Version Previewed: Amiga

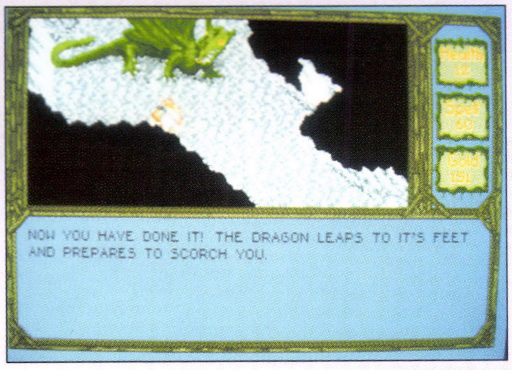
Lords of Time is a puzzle-quest adventure from Hollyware, a new publisher started by David Boyles, one of the prime movers behind the now-defunct Microllusions.

In fact, the visual presentation and some elements of the interface will remind veteran adventurers of *Faery Tale Adventure*, the cult favorite published in 1989 by Microllusions. As with the earlier adventure, *Lords of Time* employs a top/down perspective, and characters can converse with friendly inhabitants of the various towns they visit.

The game includes more than 10,000 slickly scrolling screens and a story line







with genuine scope to match the game's physical dimensions. *Lords*' world contains forests, caverns, mazes, islands and mountains. Adventurers improve their skill levels in various categories by taking classes at Guild shops. The player-character can obtain over 50 items, including weapons, armor, food and drink and may also learn to cast more than 20 spells.

The randomization of puzzle solutions each time the game is played is a nice touch, giving it a much longer play life.

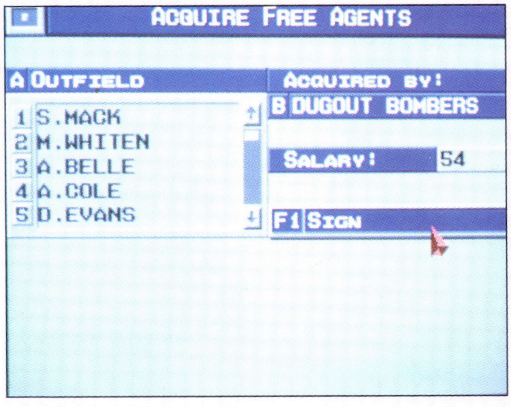
—B.K.

***Lords of Time*, by software newcomer Hollyware, contains over 10,000 slickly scrolling screens.**

Fantasy Manager (Update)

MICROLEAGUE SPORTS ASSOCIATION
Version Previewed: IBM PC

Barry Morstain and Paul Kelly's original game, *MicroLeague Baseball*, was a little light in terms of its statistical underpinnings, but its presentation, which included fully animated plays and a user-friendly interface, more than made up for its shortcomings. In fact, it was the consistent choice among face-to-face user leagues, many of which played full 164-game seasons and boasted as many as eight teams in two divisions.



MLSA's *Fantasy Manager* offers a cerebral version of the national pastime.

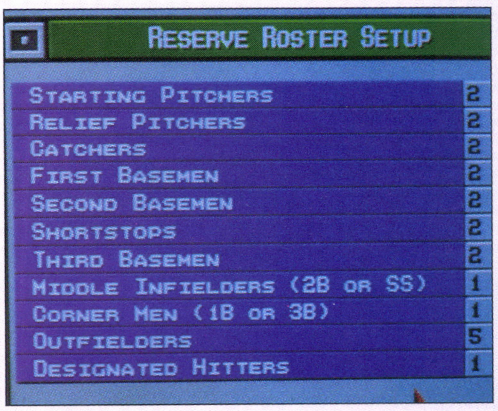
Since then, MLSA has wisely supplemented its primary product with annual season disks containing stats and ratings for all major league players during the previous season, specialty team disks and a General Manager/Owner's Disk. The GM/Owner's Disk made league play possible by introducing utilities that permitted trading and drafting of one's own team from a complete American and National League player base. A redesigned version of the original game, *MicroLeague Baseball 2*, was also released, removing the bugs and enhancing the original graphics.

Several years ago, MicroLeague hired the man behind its major competition: Ed Daniels, creator of the *Pure-Stat* sports games. MLSA also shrewdly acquired Jim Nangano, formerly of First Star. Ed expanded the games' statistical base, while Jim enhanced the animations and sound effects.

Games such as *MicroLeague Football* and *MicroLeague Baseball—The Manager's Challenge* showcase the results of that collaboration, as does the latest from MLSA, *MicroLeague Fantasy Manager/USA Today Edition*, a game allowing users to set up and easily run a fantasy baseball league. The *USA Today* on-line service tie-in, meanwhile, permits the managers to download statistics on a daily basis. The program then automatically incorporates the updated stats, saving the league commissioner a considerable amount of boring scouting.

Baseball fans will be entranced, but those who prefer action-oriented contests instead of this more cerebral version will want to look elsewhere.

—B.K.



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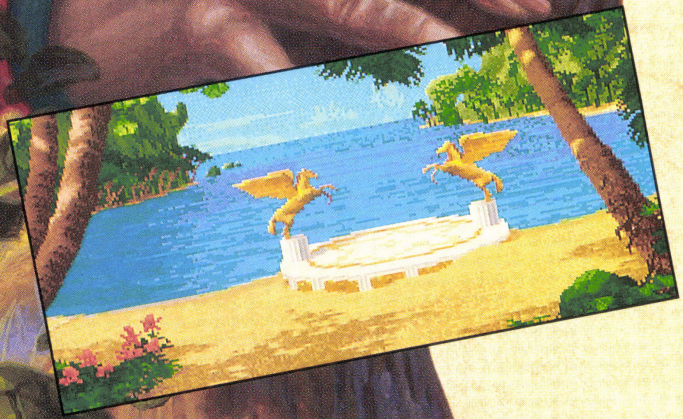

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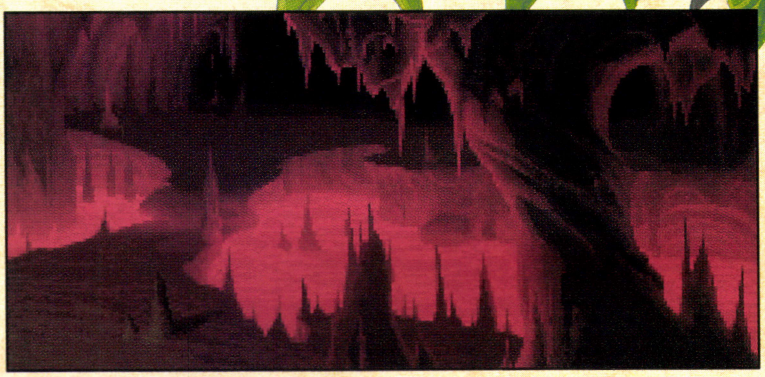

Gorgeous scenes and realistic animation draw you into this fantasy adventure. Elegant point-and-click control makes it easy to play. The fully orchestrated soundtrack will captivate you.

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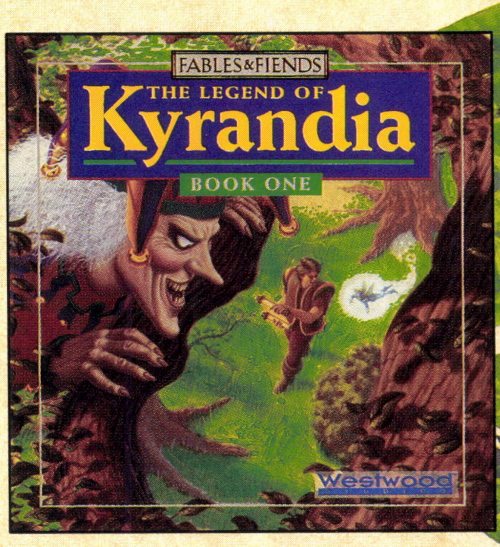

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Agony

PSYGNOSIS
Versions: Amiga ($49.99), Atari ST ($49.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Agony, the latest in gorgeous ennui from Psygnosis, is a true thing of beauty. The side-scrolling on the Amiga version is supple and flawless, the colors almost mesmerizingly pastel and the music is almost otherworldly. It's easy to learn, and when the player-character, a gracefully animated owl, belches forth a blast of white power and blows away a sinister-looking enemy fish monster, gamers almost feel like they have advanced a notch on the plane of spiritual evolution.

In other words, the design team Art & Magic came up with a game that looks and sounds like a million dollars. *Agony* is as technically impressive as any side-scrolling shootout in the 16-bit video-game universe and blows most of them away in terms of fluid animation and musical accompaniment.

There is even a collection of magical spell icons that can be collected during game play, then summoned up on command by hitting the space bar. The spells include: Reverse Energy, for taking out enemies from behind; a Rotating Fireball, which surrounds the player-character with protective energy; a Time Freeze, which stuns all on-screen foes; Invulnerability; a Smart Bomb and several others. These easily accessible spells give the game sufficient depth to keep the player's eyes from glazing over after the first play session.

Alas, for all its pretty scenery, its haunting score and technical purity, *Agony* doesn't give the gamer nearly enough play value to match its ethereal sound and beauty. It becomes one of those games that users invite everyone over to see, soak in the oohs and ahs, then file away in a closet.

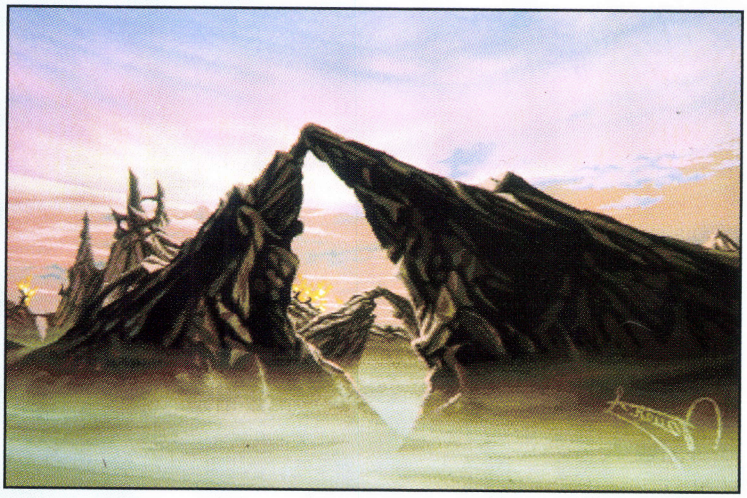
The cryptic documentation doesn't help either. Instead of giving the gamer a simple scenario to deal with, the writers go into a spasm of purple prose along the lines of: "Grand Master Sun Wizard, Acanthropis stood on the crest of Bromire and sighed into the cool, morning breeze. For a few brief moments his steamy breath danced above his furrowed brow before being whipped away on the wind towards the dark and distant mountains of Krocott." Pretty heady stuff for a glorified side-shooter.

Agony is a very simple game to review. It is lovely to look at and enchanting to listen to; however, it could be a heck of a lot more fun to play.

—Bill Kunkel

Psygnosis Ltd.
29 St. Mary's Court
Brookline, MA 02146
(617) 731-3553

***Agony* is as technically impressive as any side-scrolling shootout in the 16-bit video-game universe.**



Celtic Legends

UBI SOFT
Versions: Amiga ($49.95)
IBM PC ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

An unusual blend of military strategy and role-playing adventure, *Celtic Legends* transports one or two players to the mythical land of Celtika, where Magic is an exact science. Gamers maneuver troops

Celtic Legends is an intriguing game with a fresh play-system.

over a hex/grid map, and then conduct individual, spell-assisted combat on the tactical screen.

The death of the realm's Master Magician has thrown once-serene Celtika into turmoil. Two acolytes of the deceased mage possess equivalent power but divergent philosophies. Sogrom the Red is a power-mad, would-be dictator. He has allied himself with the dark forces in an effort to usurp the title of Demog (Master Magician) of Celtika.

Eskel the Blue is a more benevolent sorcerer, and Celtika's council looks to him to defend the land against Sogrom's vile machinations. As Grand Commander of Celtika's armed forces, Eskel's mission is to topple the usurper before he can bring a long night of evil to Celtika. At the start of the game, the two factions have been fighting for many years, though a potentially climactic battle is shaping up on the islands of Rochebrume, a focus of great magical power.

The entire game is icon-directed, though there are a few keystroke utility commands. Both tactical and strategic displays communicate a lot of information without sacrificing much clarity or covering too much of the bold artwork with intrusive text windows.

The icon control system, though extensive, presents few problems. This is fortunate, because *Celtic Legends* is saddled with a poorly written rule book that leaves most phases of the game unexplained. A two-sided reference card fills in some of the gaps, but an innovative and complex game such as *Celtic Legends* really requires a more lucid and comprehensive set of rules.

Magicians can call upon 15 spells and three rituals. The spells include fireballs, invisibility and lightning. The three rituals are incantation, transformation and teleportation. It is through incantation that the player summons friendly supernatural creatures to help in the battle.

Magic is especially powerful in castles and cromlechs. The latter are particularly rich sources of magical energy, but they are patrolled by savages that will furiously attack anyone who dares to employ magic against them.

Celtic Legends is an intriguing game with a fresh play-system. It would have benefited from a final development polish and better documentation, but a mentally stimulating role-playing strategy game shines through these imperfections.

—Arnie Katz

UBI Soft Inc.
15 Atwood Ave.
Sausalito, CA 94965
(415) 332-8749

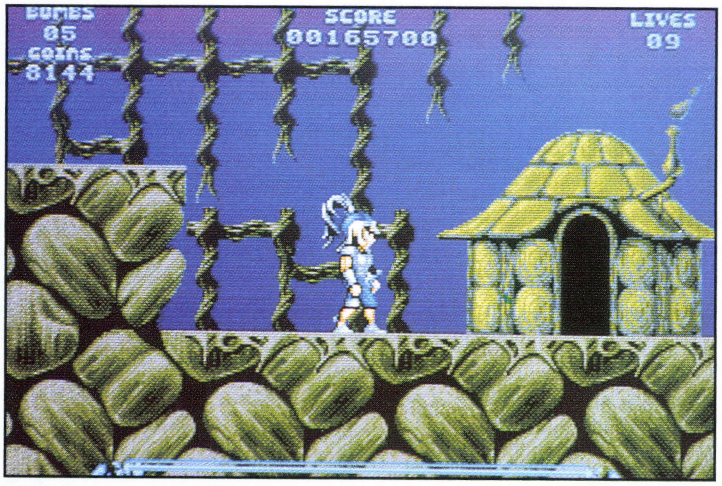
Leander

PSYGNOSIS
Version: Amiga ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

There have been far too many games in which the object is to save a princess. From the *Super Mario Bros.* games to just about any of the "old school" of RPGs, there has always been some sinister entity at the core. The same is true for *Leander*, an arcade game with some adventure elements. However, *Leander* differs from other "defeat the evil being" games because it shows off Psygnosis' distinct graphics, sound effects and game play.

The object this time is to travel through Honshu as Leander, the emperor's hero, destroy all the monsters that Thanatos unleashed and then defeat Thanatos himself. This frees the emperor's daughter and wins her love. Standard fare as far as plots go, yet *Leander* deserves attention be-

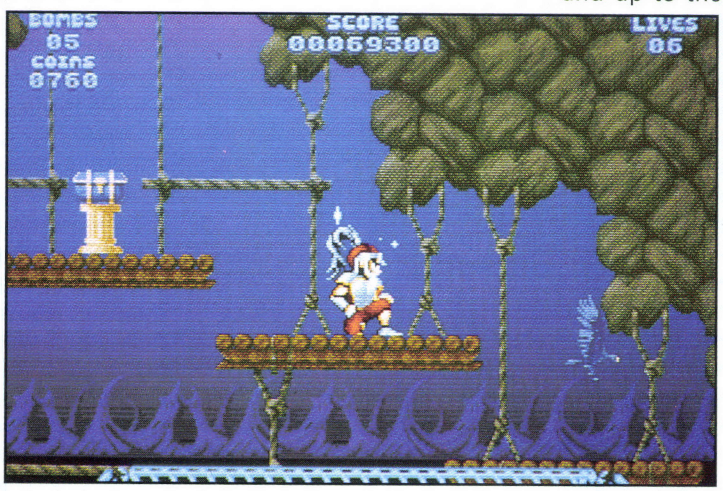


cause Psygnosis combined its unique monsters, sound effects and scrolling action for a fun and challenging game. It takes a long time to get to Thanatos, who awaits the player at the end of the third level.

Each of the three game levels has seven stages, with a giant boss creature in the last stage. The first level throws a queen spider on the player, the second reveals a giant otter and the third level revives the spider and otter and adds Thanatos' pet monster (whatever it's supposed to be), plus a climactic battle with Thanatos himself.

Leander shares some similarity to *Shadow of the Beast*, with scrolling screens, a character who primarily jumps and shoots and lots of monsters to kill. The on-screen hero wears armor (strength indicated by color) for protection from the monsters' hits and traps. At full strength, the player can only take five hits of damage, so the player must seek strength potions to restore the armor. They're not too hard to find; some monsters leave behind potions and coins when killed. There are also chests strewn through part of the game. Coins are used to buy better weapons and armor. This is necessary, particularly in the third game level, so it's important not to waste money. If the player loses a life, in most instances the special weapon is also lost.

Each stage contains some important object, often hidden in a chest, and a gate/portal to the next stage. A nice touch is the instruction of one of the emperor's Sirens at the start of each stage. She shows the player the object to find and reveals the correct approach for completing that stage.



Psygnosis' *Leander* combines unique monsters, sound effects and scrolling action for a fun and challenging game.

Upon completion of a level, a password is revealed so the player need not repeat levels. However, with only three levels in the game, the password feature is almost worthless; a password for each stage would have been more valuable. The game gets very difficult in the latter stages of the third level, and, if a powerful weapon is lost, there is almost no chance for success against Thanatos or his pet creature. Some special weapon should be available in the very last stage, because it's extremely difficult for the gamer to finish off Thanatos as he flies around and changes shape.

Graphics and animation are top-notch and up to the established high standards of Psygnosis games. There are plenty of disgusting monsters, as well as sneaky humans and dive-bombing birds. Character animation is very fluid and complements the creativity of the artists.

The sound effects and music make the experience more pleasing, but both cannot be active at the same time. A hot key switches between the two audio tracks, but most players will choose to leave the music off, since the sound effects are quite important as warnings of off-screen enemies.

Leander is another winner from Psygnosis. The only real problem with the game is its difficulty. Movements must be near-perfect. This may be a little too much to ask of gamers. Still, *Leander* has a nice structure and plenty of rewards for players who make it through the stages toward the game's climax.

—Russ Ceccola

Psygnosis
29 St. Mary's Court
Brookline, MA 02146
(617) 731-3553

Black Crypt

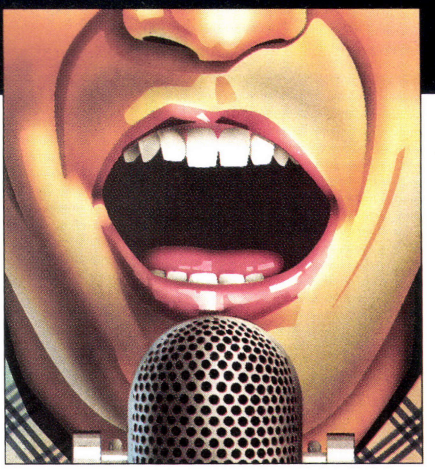
ELECTRONIC ARTS

Versions: Amiga ($49. 95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

Remember when Advanced Dungeons & Dragons was all the rage? Everybody wanted to play the game and there were

Finally, Baseball So Real It Calls 'Em As It Sees 'Em.



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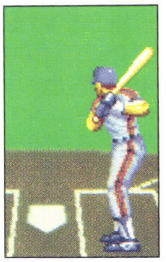

Will Clark

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Terry Steinbach

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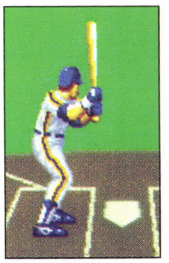
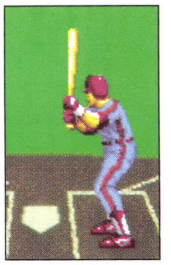


Travis Fryman



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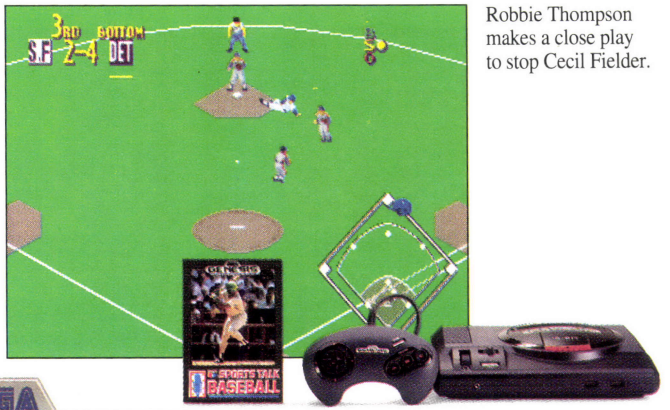

Robbie Thompson makes a close play to stop Cecil Fielder.

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only a handful of modules available so it was pretty easy to stay current in the game system. A surprising number of people wanted to be the dungeon master, as opposed to the player who explored the areas of a game.

The designers of *Black Crypt* must be excellent dungeon masters. Inspired by their dual love of AD&D and the Amiga, *Black Crypt* is a game along the lines of *Dungeon Master* or *Eye of the Beholder* that thrusts the player headlong into battles, strange locations and a very well-designed dungeon layout of over 20 levels. It features a corny, standard RPG plot in which the object is to defeat the evil Lord Esteroth, who once before caused trouble and was banished by a similar party of adventurers many years ago. However, it takes full advantage of the Amiga's sound and graphic capabilities that bring it to life before the player's eyes.

Black Crypt goes beyond the ordinary in the audiovisual areas, combining rousing sound and smooth animations.

Parties can consist of fighters, magic users, clerics and druids. It is best to have one of each type because each of the classes has at least one strength that makes it better in that way than the other classes. Clerics, magic users and druids can cast spells, but fighters have only one spell available, to reveal the party's map coordinates, which is a very useful spell considering the traps, teleport squares and other devious tricks that make a mapmaker's job frustrating. On the other hand, fighters have a much better chance of surviving physical combat than the other classes, and one should be placed at the front as leader in order to eliminate certain monsters without calling upon the spell casters.

A game interface is quite important in RPGs because of the time the player spends using it. Game companies continually look for easier interfaces; the result is that games play a lot better now than they did ten years ago. *Black Crypt* offers yet another interface that seems a hybrid between the *Ultima* inventory system and the *Wizardry* function layout, but retains its own identity. Game commands depend entirely on the mouse. Players enter movements via a set of arrows. The interface lets players forget the computer and concentrate on exploration. The elaborate inventory system permits each party member to carry items like chests, pouches and quivers that can contain other objects. A picture of each character appears on the main game screen, along with icons for any objects (usually weapons and shields) active in each hand. Players use a spell by clicking on its name in their spell book to memorize it and then on the stone tablet of memorized spells to cast it. A nice auto-mapping feature completes the loop and takes away the tedious chore of laying out the dungeon on graph paper, which would be a monumental task in *Black Crypt* because of the intricacies of the dungeon and the large number of special squares. The game manual's second half is a clue book that details each level for those who get stuck and don't want to spend more money to get unstuck.

Black Crypt goes beyond the ordinary in the audiovisual areas; the graphics and sounds are superb. Monsters come to life with rousing noises, and the dungeons draw the player into the game with the 64-color extra-half-bright Amiga graphics. Animation is smooth and quick so that the player can really feel each step the party takes on the screen. The game is seen from a first-person perspective, and each of the spells has associated animation so players can see the results. The monsters are so detailed that some of them have drool dripping from

their mouths. Additionally, the music greatly heightens the game experience so that the player's heart will beat a little faster as he turns a corner to see what lies beyond.

Regardless of how nice the game looks and sounds and how easy it is to control the party, what's most important is that *Black Crypt* is a lot of fun. The dungeon levels bring back memories of Friday afternoon AD&D sessions in high school, particularly because of the trickiness of the levels and the ruthlessness of the monsters.

Black Crypt is perfect for Amiga adventurers who are sick of games that don't take advantage of their machines and that don't involve a lot of creative thought. *Black Crypt* has all those elements, plus a lot more for dungeon fans.

—R.C.

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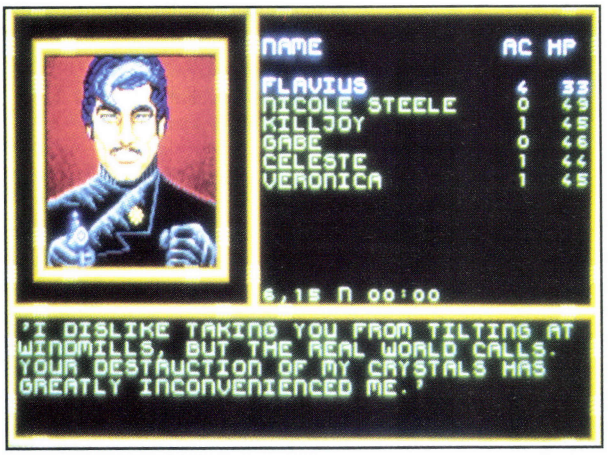

Buck Rogers: Matrix Cubed

STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS
Versions: Amiga ($49.95), IBM PC ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Buck Rogers: Matrix Cubed involves the ongoing struggle between NEO (Buck Rogers' New Earth Organization) and its old nemesis, RAM (Russo-American Mercantile). Set in the 25th century, the objective is to assemble a group of scientists and develop a controversial device called the Matrix.

***Buck Rogers: Matrix Cubed* could have benefited from some feedback from sci-fi aficionados and writers to improve the "feel" of the game.**

In theory, the Matrix is capable of converting any matter into a plasma of the basic elements, and reconstituting the "primeval ooze" into whatever form is desired, with energy as a beneficial byproduct. NEO sees the device as Earth's only opportunity to rebuild itself from centuries of abuse and pollution. Unfortunately, other groups see the usefulness of the Matrix as a weapon.

The primary adversary to the player's ambitions is a radical new group called PURGE (Prevention of Unwanted Research and Genetic Engineering), which seeks to use the Matrix to rid the system of bio-engineered life forms. Since Terrans are the only nonenhanced group around, the issue of genocide must be raised.

For players to enjoy a role-playing game to the fullest, they must be able to develop empathy for their

characters and the predicaments they face. Unfortunately, Matrix simply does not deliver in this area. While nonlinear plot lines are appreciated by most gamers, *Matrix* has too many irrelevant side trips that detract from the main objective. To illustrate the apathy and disjointed plot points, consider the starting position. The player is told by Buck Rogers that his team is being sent on a mission of "great importance," to protect Lord Berkely from assassination on the day of his coronation as Sun King. En route, the party had to do battle with a number of PURGE henchmen, and the medical member of the party was killed. Not wanting to continue without him, the party left the airlock to recruit a new character, whereupon they were greeted by Buck Rogers, who said, in essence, "Too bad about Lord Berkely; now here's what I *really* want you to do...." Buck's comments made it apparent that there was no need to go back and spend time and effort trying to save Berkely's hide.

This type of disregard for the player continues all the way to the endgame, where efforts are rewarded with a measly three cheers for the home team and an ungraceful drop to the DOS prompt.

Mechanically, *Matrix* is a very sound product. It is a continued refinement of the established AD&D gold box series. Players recruit and equip a team of six characters rated for basic skills and specialized attributes. Naturally, these skills are specific to the Buck Rogers environment, such as "Rocket Jock."

Play occurs on a *Windows*-type display screen, with character attributes on the right, action windows for movement and combat on the left and a command bar along the bottom. Movement occurs in first person 3-D "tunnel vision," while combat is portrayed in a three-quarter, top/down perspective of the immediate area surrounding the party. The interface is very easy to manipulate, which is important, particularly when fully 80% of the player's time will be devoted to space opera hack-and-slash combat.

Matrix is an above average offering that could have benefited from some feedback by writers and/or science fiction aficionados, either of whom could have improved the "feel" of the game. As it is, players will still derive good play value from the product, but it is doubtful that it will become a classic on anyone's shelf.

—Ed Dille

Strategic Simulations Inc.
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Sierra's *ECO Quest* is a cute product with a message for all ages: Take care of our environment.

ECO Quest

SIERRA ON-LINE
Versions: Amiga ($39.95), Atari ST ($39.95), IBM ($39.95), Macintosh ($39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

ECO Quest is almost too cute and lighthearted to be a product with a conscience, but Sierra seems to have struck a balance that works. While *ECO Quest* isn't as scholarly an approach to the environmental issues of the day as Chris Crawford's *Balance of the Planet*, it's a good primer for development of environmental awareness. But it's not stuffy; the experience is fun as well as enlightening.

Players assume the persona of Adam, son of a marine researcher working on top secret government research concerning long-range sonar transmissions. Additionally, his lab is being utilized to study the spread of pollution in the Caribbean. These projects involve so much of his father's time that Adam becomes involved in many of the experiments. The game begins with Adam and his father in the lab, looking at an oil-covered bird rescued on the beach. Together, father and son clean the bird and discuss topics relevant to the survival of wildlife. After this, Adam's father leaves, and the player has the opportunity to explore the lab and develop a feel for the program's interface.

continued on page 98

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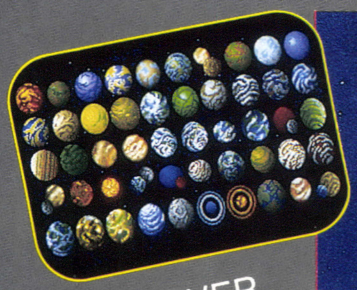

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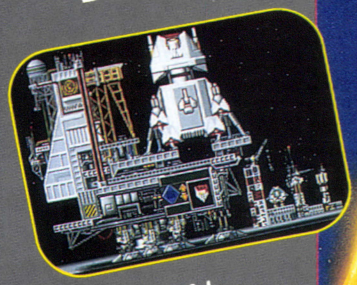

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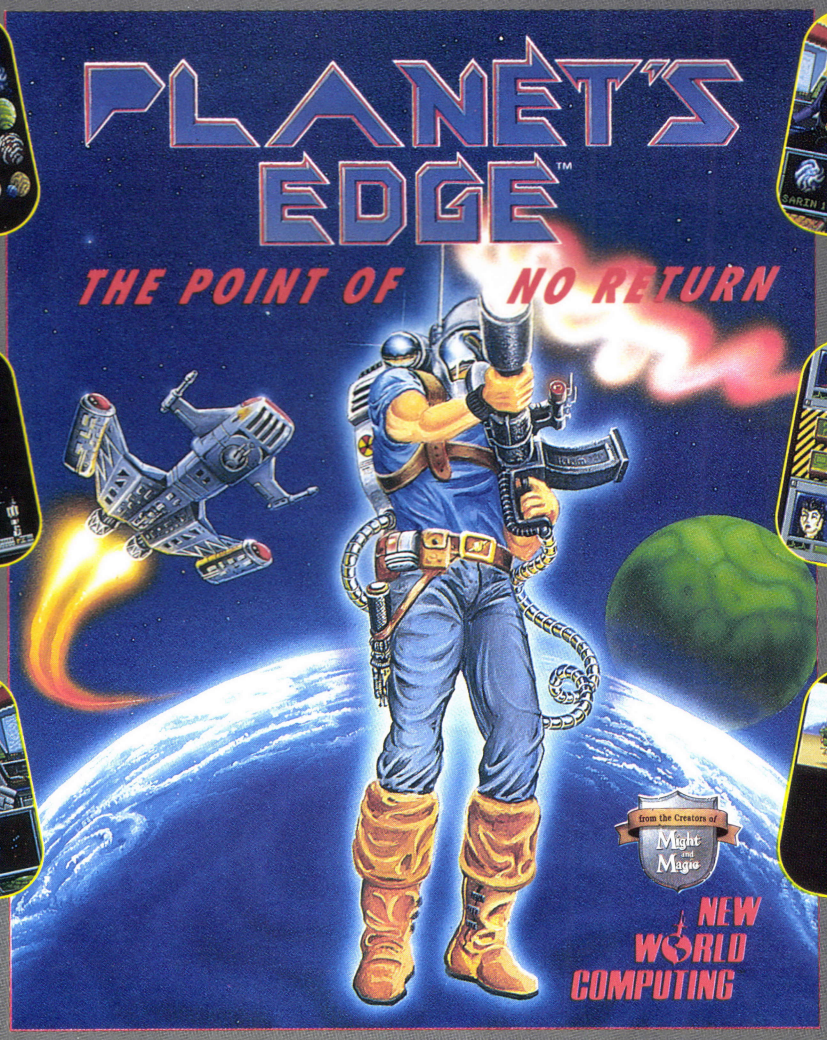

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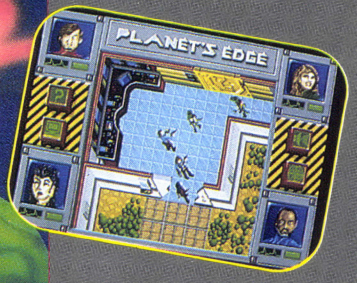

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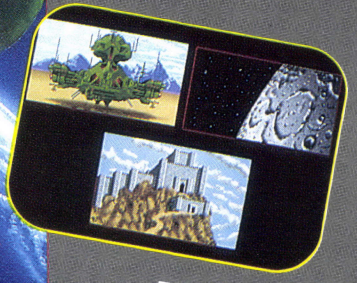

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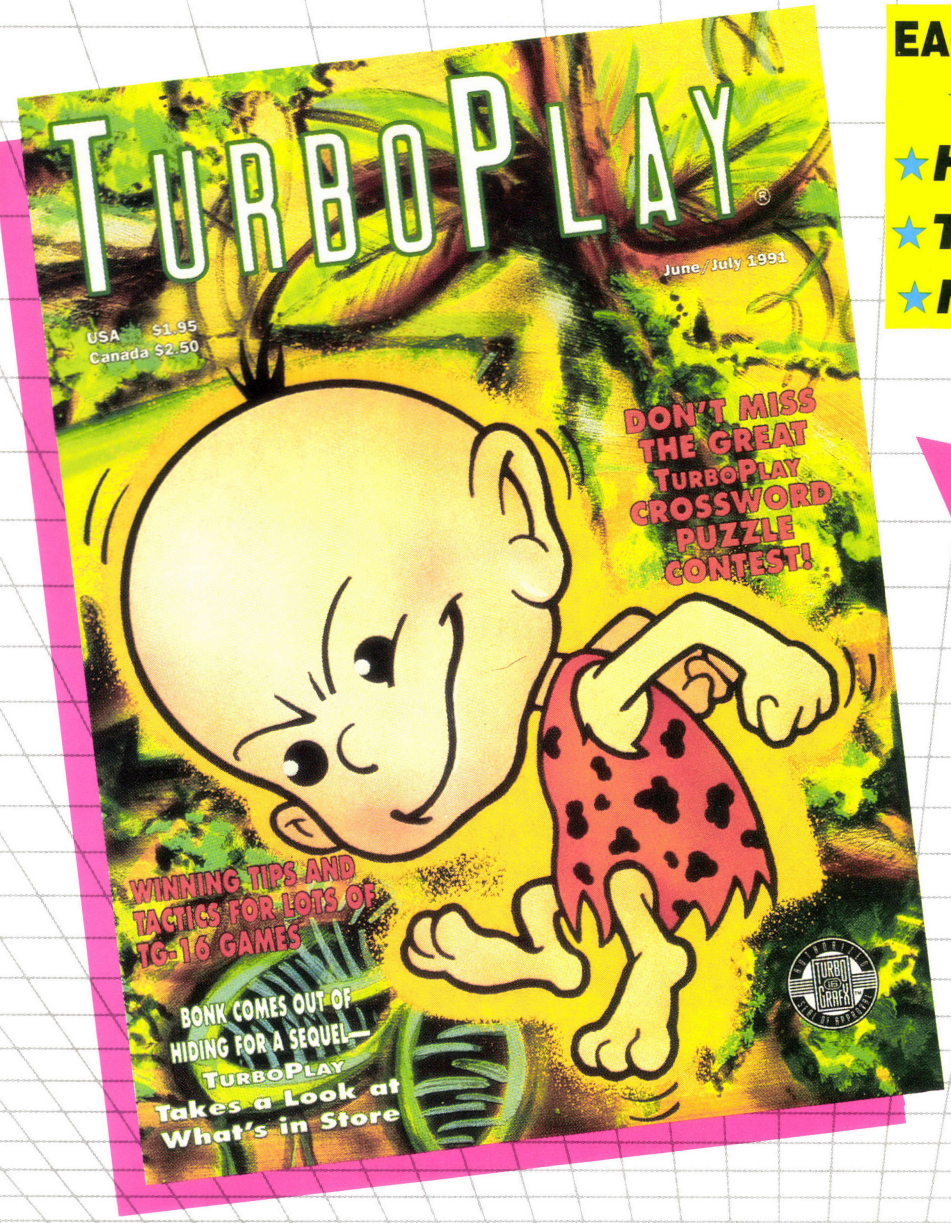

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CMUAW

continued from page 94

All actions are via Sierra's improved mouse interface that requires no input of dialogue. A hidden command bar can be accessed by sliding the mouse pointer to the top of the screen. Standard adventuring actions, such as walk, look, manipulate, talk and inventory are portrayed via icons. A backpack icon pops up a second window for inventory manipulation. All of the command bar actions, with the exception of game save and restore controls, are accessed via the right mouse button. The location of the on-screen character is also not critical, as it has been in the past. To look at something across the room, clicking the eye icon on the object makes the character walk there and look at it. Sierra has been very responsive to user feedback throughout its product line, and the dividends are apparent in *ECO Quest*.

***ECO Quest*'s graphics are on a par with other Sierra adventures and offer an easy-to-use command bar as an interface.**

Adam's lab exploration should accumulate approximately 100 of the game's 725-point maximum. (Note: Don't overlook watering the gerbil; it's an entertaining sequence.) The treatment room is a divided swimming pool with a dolphin recuperating from "capture stress syndrome." Adam must begin to develop the dolphin's trust, since talking to the dolphin and two mackerel is required before entering the pool. After the dolphin takes Adam for a dorsal fin ride around the pool, a game of Frisbee unveils a very special thing about this particular dolphin—it talks. This is the point at which the adventure begins. The dolphin is on a quest to find the missing great Whale King, and Adam will accompany him.

Graphically, *ECO Quest* is on a par with the later *Leisure Suit Larry* titles, as opposed to the detail of *King's Quest V*. All of the animations are smooth and dovetail nicely with the accompanying soundtrack. Character movement is fluid, and none of the locations are restrictive or frustrating to the player from a mechanical standpoint.

Diehard Sierra questbusters may find it too simplistic, since none of the puzzles in *ECO Quest* are particularly taxing. But, for most people, it's very entertaining to play and beautiful to see, and it should appeal to both young adults as well as their parents.

—E.D.

Sierra On-Line
40033 Sierra Way
Oakhurst, CA 93614
(209) 683-4468

Omar Sharif on Bridge

INTERPLAY

Version: IBM ($59. 95)

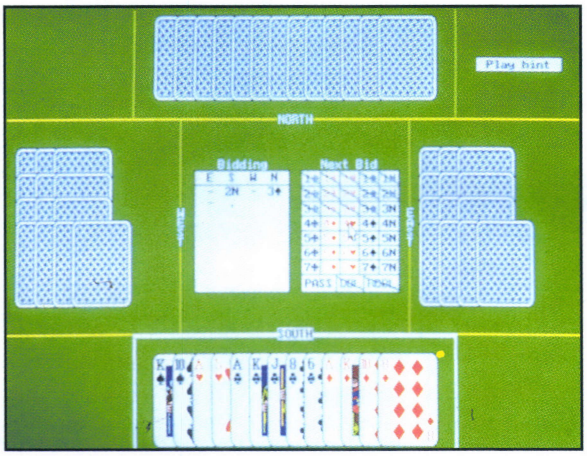
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

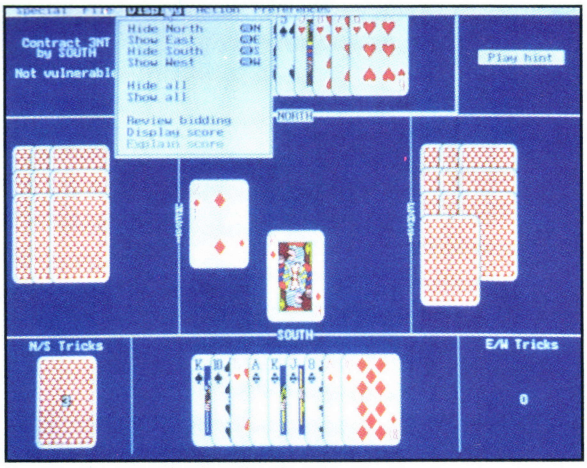
Contract bridge is one of the most widely played card games in the world today. Derived from whist, an 18th-century card game documented by Edmund Hoyle, contract bridge evolved into its present form in the early 20th century. In its most basic form, bridge is very similar to other trump games, such as hearts or spades. Bridge is set apart from the others by the complexity of bidding and the myriad scoring strategies available.

Omar Sharif is one of the recognized modern masters of the game, and, as Interplay received his endorsement, players should reasonably expect a product that lives up to the name. (We won't list examples of celebrity endorsements that didn't.) Fortunately, *Omar Sharif on Bridge* fulfills the expectations of novice and experienced players alike.

A slick, but not too glitzy, title sequence opens the program, including a digitized photograph of Mr. Sharif accompanied by his voice welcoming you to the game. Then the main menu pops up so players can get right into the game. Keyboard is supported, but mouse control really keeps the game moving.

The game defaults to solitaire, with the player and his computer partner on the





Interplay's *Omar Sharif on Bridge* is a smooth, feature-filled rendition of this classic card game.

North/South team (cards at the top and bottom of the screen), but humans can be substituted for computer players as desired. This option does require multiple players to look away from the screen while others reveal their hands to play a card, thereby slowing play considerably.

Gamers may play from a randomly dealt deck, manually enter each hand to test different strategies or load pre-generated hands from the disk. The latter option can be accompanied by a tutorial and consists of ten hands designed to illustrate everything from successful no trump play up to taking a Grand Slam (all 13 tricks). Regardless of the type of deal, a hint function is available for both bidding and play. Clicking on this during the bid automatically enters the proper bid for the player's hand, taking into account the existing level of the bid as it progresses.

The computer will consistently bid the maximum possible for the given hand, if allowed. This is an admirable quality for any player, but leads and tricks must be in flawless sequence to make the bid. More conservative players may want to hold a tighter reign, but the computer opponents will bid aggressively.

During games, the hint function plays the best card in the hand for the given lead. There is also a novice function that explains why a given play is illegal if attempted, instead of the computer simply beeping and not allowing the play. One may take back plays, move forward, switch hands and abort from any given deal at any time.

Aesthetically, *Omar Sharif* has a lot to offer. Table color can be customized to almost any hue the player desires. Further, there is a full screen of card backs to choose from, similar to airline, dime store discount or tarot card backs. The full range of soundboards are supported, and both music and digitized speech are excellently reproduced on the Sound Blaster. Player preferences for all of these features can be saved to the disk and loaded automatically when the game boots.

Omar Sharif on Bridge is a polished, professional rendition of a classic, strategy card game, with easy interface and good player aids. It's definitely a compliment to its license.

—E.D.

Interplay Productions
3710 S. Susan, #100
Santa Ana, CA 92704
(714) 545-2411

Casino Pack 1

MINDSCAPE

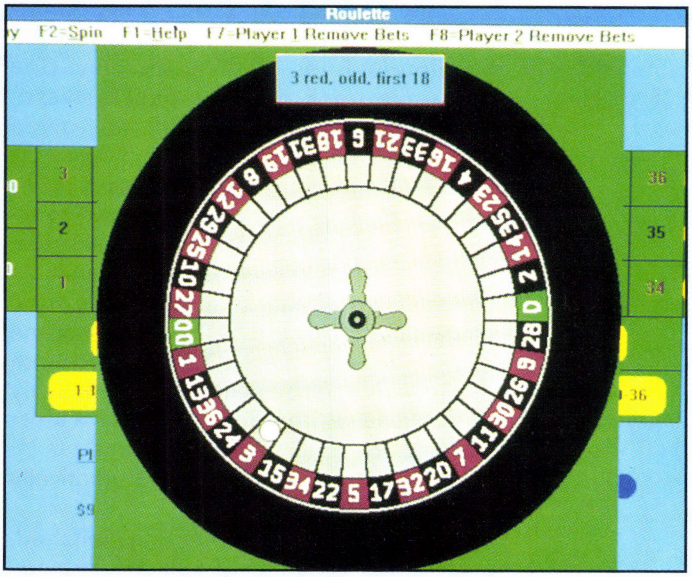
Version: IBM PC ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

If this program's aim was to simulate four games of chance found in most gambling houses in Atlantic City, Reno and Las Vegas, then it has hit the mark like drawing to an inside straight. If the desire was to create the aura, atmosphere and excitement of those "palaces of sin," then it's no better than a pair of deuces in a game that's jacks or better to open.

Casino Pack I requires *Windows* to operate, as well as 500K of hard-drive space, one megabyte of RAM, a VGA graphics card and at least a 286 CPU. Once those conditions are met, it runs smoothly from the turn of the first wheel to the play of the final card.

The four games included are WinPoker, Win21, WinKeno and Roulette. Of that quartet, blackjack (Win21) is the favorite, and this version comes with all the options needed to hone strategy or merely risk some money without worrying about the effect on the family budget. The game can be played with one deck or as many



Mindscape's *Casino Pack* will give you a stunning graphic representation of such gaming activities as roulette and blackjack.

as six (to provide a challenge for the card counters).

Unlike many gambling simulations, and certainly like no other casino in the world, play begins with no money. It is possible to go deep into the red without anyone checking a credit history or calling in markers. All popular options for each game are included. Probably the lone strange element is WinPoker, a hybrid of the poker machines seen in casinos and face-to-face games. Play is similar to five-card draw, with a monetary payoff for certain hands from a pair of jacks on up.

The program makes use of a mouse, though it actually plays more quickly when substituting keystrokes for most of the betting options, instead of pulling down a window each time a card is required.

Graphically the game is a winner, hands down. The resolution is so good there's never a question about whether a card is a club or a spade. Adjustments can be made to select any of 256 available colors, and another button controls the intensity of each.

The only way the game fails is in giving a casino feel. It wouldn't have been hard to put each game against a colorful mood-setting backdrop, with maybe even a choice of several personalized dealers and pit bosses. This could have added spice and pizzazz to the package.

As it is, gamers will have to find the challenge of the statistical probability imbedded in the program reason enough to call it up time after time.

—Rick Teverbaugh

The Software Toolworks Inc.
60 Leveroni Court
Novato, CA 94949
(415) 883-3000

Jack Nicklaus Golf & Course Design: Signature Edition

ACCOLADE

Version: IBM PC ($69.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

While this is not the first golf game to utilize 256-color VGA screens, it is the first to offer a construction set that uses 256 colors! Accolade refers to it as the "ultimate sequel to the most successful line of golf simulations on the market."

It should be noted that the required minimum configuration is a 16 MHz AT, so gamers know right off the bat that this puppy requires horsepower to fully max out the experience. A VGA/MCGA monitor and graphics card are also required. Mouse and keyboard input are supported.

The *Signature Edition* is protected by code wheel/password entry. Soundboard support is not configured until the player gets beyond the password stage and accesses the proper menu, but the configuration is saved so that new startups are accompanied by Ad Lib music, rather than the irritating PC internal speaker's tunes. Both the game and the construction modules require only 530K of memory. A fully implemented DOS 5.0 environment does not have to be customized, but players are warned not to run the game module from within *Windows* (screen updates are half as fast and the sound effects are literally destroyed).

Ad Lib music will always be much better than the PC internal speaker. But, surprisingly, the Ad Lib sound effects were also exceptionally good, resembling digitizations. The best effect is the "whoosh" when swinging a club, followed by fan appreciation. Other realistic sounds include the effect that occurs when the golf ball drops into the cup and the plopping noise when it falls into a water trap. The only problem is that the volume set for the music by the software is much louder, and when it is turned down to a reasonable level by using the control at the back of the unit, the sound effects become almost too soft to hear.

The beautiful digitized photos of golf course scenery and of Mr. Nicklaus himself, take about three seconds to be fully displayed, but the action screens take from nine to 18 seconds, depending on user selectable "resolution." Adjusting from mini-

mum to maximum resolution did not appreciably change the looks of the action screens, and the potential of doubling the speed of the screen updates makes low resolution that much more desirable.

There seems to be a minor hitch in the "drive" animation: Some of the flesh tones used would seem more appropriate in a zombie movie; the foreground trees are too heavily dithered; and the putting greens could have used more shades of color to simulate sloping. As it stands, grid lines are still necessary in order to see the lay of the land. But these are all just minor complaints.

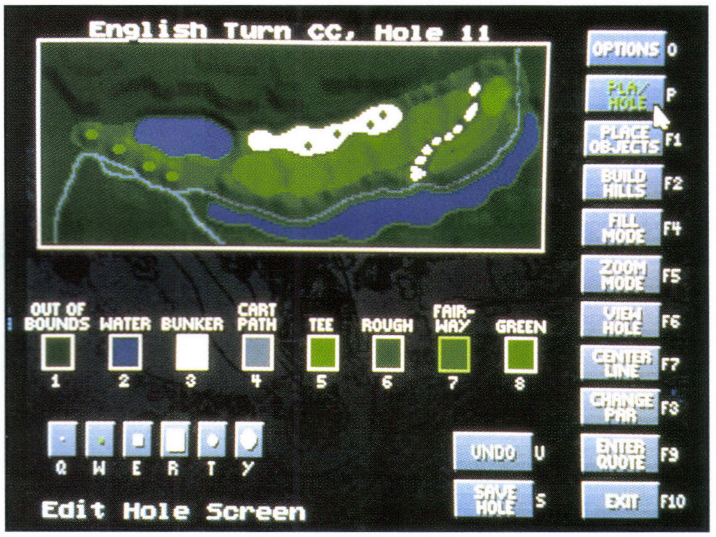
Since play mechanics should be relatively simple in a golf game, it's puzzling why they made lining up a putt so frustratingly difficult. The marker is at the very top of the screen, and it never seems to properly align with the cup and the putter. But, with practice, players are able to overcome this problem.

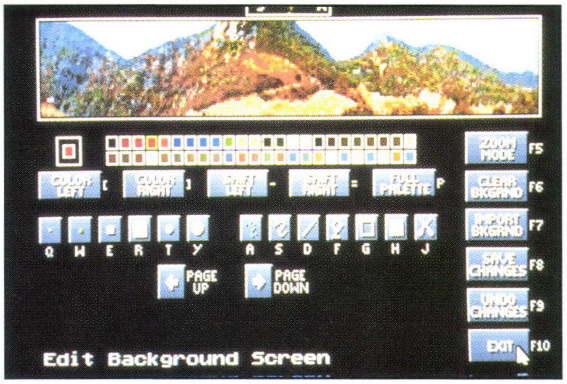
The construction set is another high point of this package. It extends the longevity of the game module by leaps and bounds, and its friendly point-and-click user interface is a pleasure to work with.

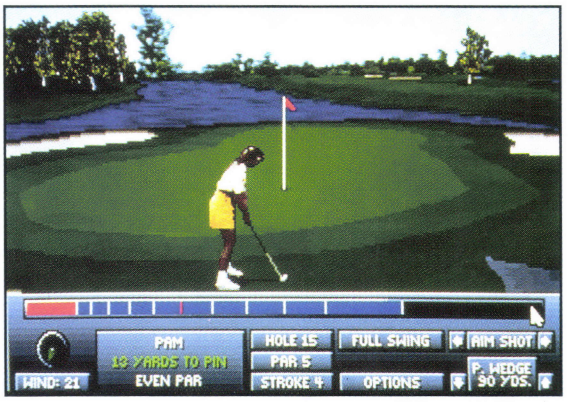
The screen redraws are the most inhibiting factor to the enjoyment of the game, but players with faster equipment will find this a less significant problem.

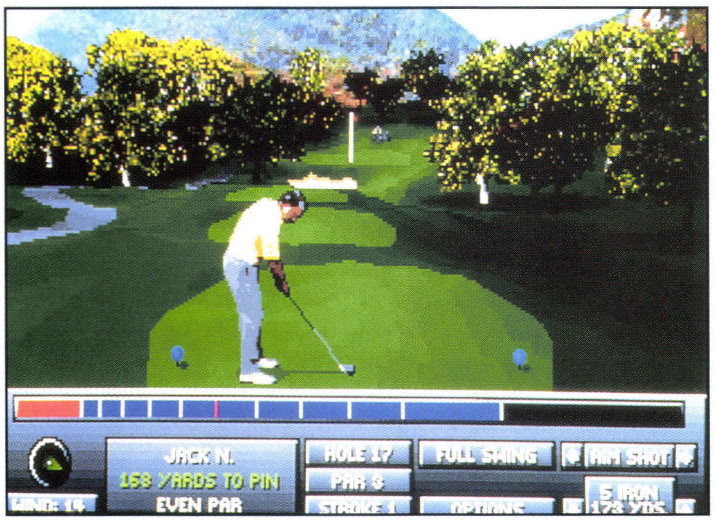
—Frank Eva

Accolade
550 S. Winchester Blvd.,
Suite 200
San Jose, CA 95128
(408) 985-1700









Accolade has created a highly realistic golf simulator, complete with true-to-life sounds and beautiful scenery, in *Jack Nicklaus Golf & Course Design: Signature Edition.*

World Circuit

MICROPROSE

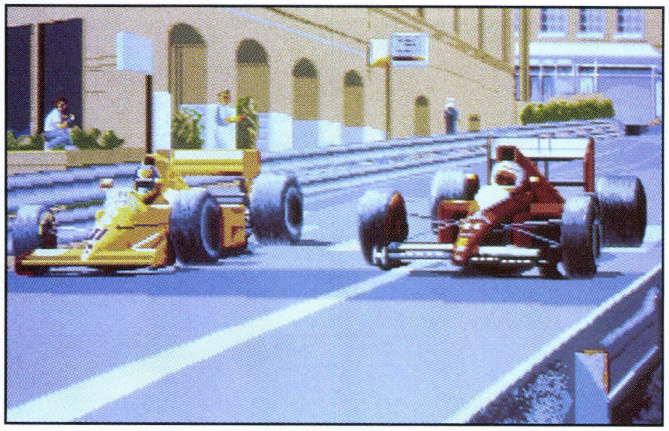
Versions: Amiga ($59.95), IBM PC ($59.95)

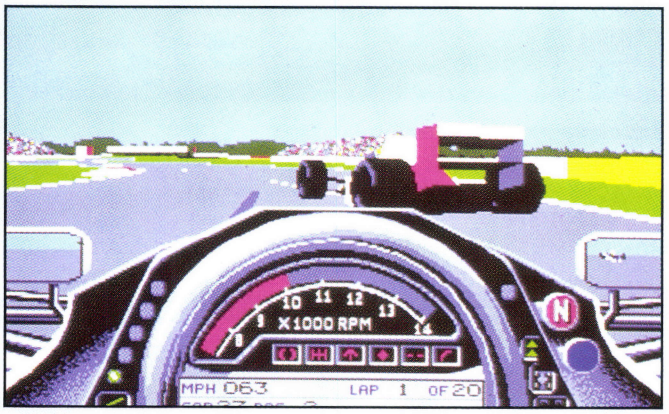
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

The latest work of art from the MicroProse team, *World Circuit* is a Formula One Grand Prix race simulation that relegates all other racing sims to the bargain bin. Players find themselves sweating in their seats as they tear up all 16 of the Grand Prix's demanding tracks, all accurately mapped in polygonal and bitmapped 3-D. Grandstands, billboards, trees, buildings.... If it's on the real world course, it's on the *World Circuit* course.

World Circuit offers so many options and such a high degree of realism that it's almost impossible to find fault (machine guns would have been nice). Control is by joystick (analog or digital) or by keyboard.

Start with the Quick Race option to get the feel of the Phoenix circuit. The bank of lighted icons across the dash is a driving aid that keeps cocky rookies from ending their careers before they've completed even one lap. Indispensable at first, auto gears, auto brakes, self-correcting spin, indestructibility, ideal line markers and suggested gear can all be deactivated and, in fact, become unavailable at the higher skill levels. All the player has to do at this point is accelerate and steer. Races may be viewed first-person from the driver's seat, from an exterior chase view, from multiple trackside cameras—even from the viewpoint of other drivers! Practice on any course, compete in single, nonchampionship races and learn to get in and out of

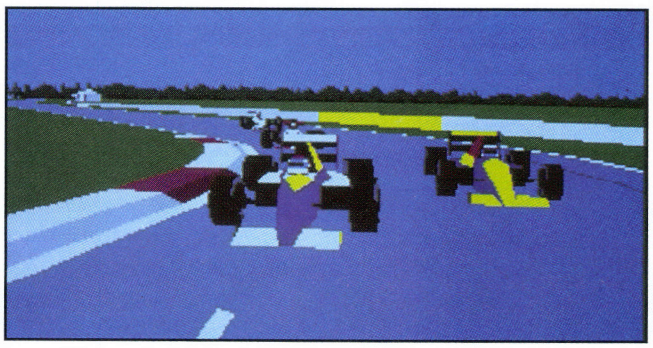




the pits without killing the crew. Once the player is comfortable with the simulator's basics, the real challenge begins in the Grand Prix Championship Season.

Before each race, the car's setup may be altered to compensate for track conditions: front and rear wing downforce, front/rear brake balance, gear ratios and choice of tire compounds that includes "wets" for inclement weather. All choices may be saved to disk, including independent setups for each course.

World Circuit is as simple or as complicated as the player wants to make it. *OutRun* fans can just put everything on automatic, switch to chase view and stomp on the gas. For the true racing buff, the entire Grand Prix experience is here, including animated pit stops, flag-waving track marshals, dramatic slipstreaming effects and the actual 1991 teams and drivers as opponents. The two side-mounted rearview mirrors are not only functional, but provide some wonderful moments, like watching a just-nudged car go spinning out of control. Action replays are also available for you to relive the thrill of victory or the agony of some spectacularly stupid move.



***World Circuit*, by MicroProse, is a detailed and demanding race simulator that lets the player set the difficulty level to his or her own taste.**

For the truly maniacal, disabling the "self-correcting spin" aid and enabling the "indestructible" mode allows the player to drive the wrong way, against traffic, inflicting all kinds of damage and chaos. But watch out for the unsportsmanlike behavior flag!

The Amiga version of *World Circuit* comes on four nonprotected disks, requires one megabyte of RAM and may be installed to a hard drive. MicroProse makes a point of apologizing for the manual copy protection, but this is quite unnecessary—their manuals are always helpful, informative and a pleasure to have lying around.

—Scott Wolf

MicroProse Software Inc.
180 Lakefront Drive
Hunt Valley, Maryland 21030
(410) 771-1151

Free D.C!

CINEPLAY INTERACTIVE
Version: IBM PC ($59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

When Avery Zedd woke in a strange place that looked suspiciously similar to Washington, D.C., he had no idea of the adventures awaiting him. Thawed from a frozen state and released onto the grounds of the Human Zoo, Zedd quickly learned that his task was to find a certain human suspected of deactivating robots visiting the zoo. With only a stun gun, a Wattson escort robot and a poisonous capsule implanted in his body (to ensure compliance with his directives), Zedd had to decide whether he would obey the robots and betray his own race in the process, or join what appeared to be a rebellion against the mechanized overlords of this new world.

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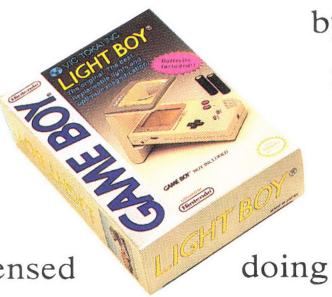

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CIRCLE #131 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

This cinematic adventure game from Cineplay Interactive assigns the player the role of Avery Zedd and guides him through an amusing science fiction quest that's like a cross between a hard-boiled detective drama and a chapter from *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*.

The game is played via a simple control system that allows the gamer only a few command options. Avery Zed and his robot companion can be moved from scene to scene using a mouse or the keyboard's arrow keys. Otherwise, the only commands normally on the screen are Stun, Talk and Use.

The Stun command allows the player to attack the various robots running amok in the zoo; the Talk command lets the player converse with the many characters that Zedd runs into; and the Use command gives the player access to a submenu from which he can choose a weapon, hop aboard Wattson or take a look at an overhead view map.

Obviously, with its limited command set, *Free D.C!* is not a full-fledged adventure game, but rather a slowly unfolding electronic story. In fact, often the game guides you to your next destination by making it impossible to go anywhere else. For example, a wrong turn may land the player in the sights of a deadly robot from which there seems no escape.

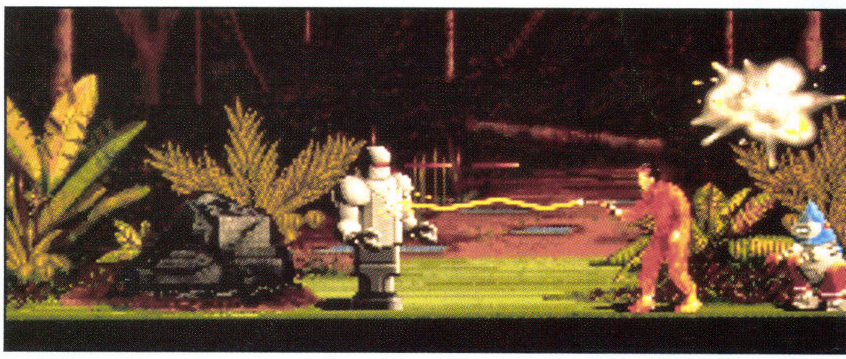
The Human Zoo is, of course, peopled with many characters that Zedd can question for clues to the mystery. During an encounter, the player can choose from up to three different types of responses. But, although the responses may slightly vary the dialogue that takes place in the encounter, the end result is usually ultimately the same.

Avery Zedd's lovable sarcasm guarantees that most encounters will produce a grin. For example, in one scene, when Zedd asks his robot companion for information, the robot says, "Feel free to access me, sir." To which Zedd replies, "On the first date?" Zedd's corny wit remains evident throughout the adventure, drawing the player easily through the game. Many players will want to save the game before each encounter so they can try the encounter repeatedly using different responses. In this way, they can see (or hear) all Zedd and the other characters have to say.

The game's graphics vary from ordinary to dazzling, depending on the current location and scene. The most impressive graphics are the digitized scenes of Washington, D.C., and the live-action portraits that frequently appear when the player converses with one of the game's other characters.

Sound effects and music are limited, but the game does include digitized voices

Cineplay Interactive's *Free D.C!* employs a simple control system and digitized graphics, making it a treat for rookie adventurers.



for some of the main encounters (sound card required for voices). You can increase the amount of digitized speech in the game with the speech expansion module ($19.95), which claims to more than double the speech in the game. Even with the expansion module, however, less than half the story's dialogue is audible, due to the amount of storage required for digitized sound. Unfortunately, there seems to be no logic to when speech is used. It turns on and off at seemingly random moments.

While *Free D.C!* is an entertaining game, it does sport a couple of flaws. First, the game tends to lock up now and then, forcing the gamer to reboot. Also, while the player can save up to ten game positions, there is no way to name (except by number) each position, which makes it difficult to know the position to load when it's time to backtrack.

Gamers new to computer adventures will find *Free D.C!* a gentle introduction to the genre; there is much to please them in this quirky but cliché-ridden tale of the future. Experienced adventurers may find the game easy, but it is still entertaining enough to warrant the purchase.

—Clayton Walnum

Cineplay Interactive Inc.
2580 NW Upshur
Portland, OR 97210
(503) 223-4449

Tracon for Windows

WESSON INTERNATIONAL
Version: IBM PC ($59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Wesson has finally produced a sequel to its popular air traffic control simulator. They took *Tracon II*, added some new features and brought one of the best ATC simulators into the world of *Windows*. The improvements are obvious.

In earlier versions, the player had to operate the game entirely from the keyboard and memorize dozens of commands. Now all the commands are in pull-down menus and duplicated in buttons and switches on the display. It really takes very little time and effort to get acquainted with the new interface.

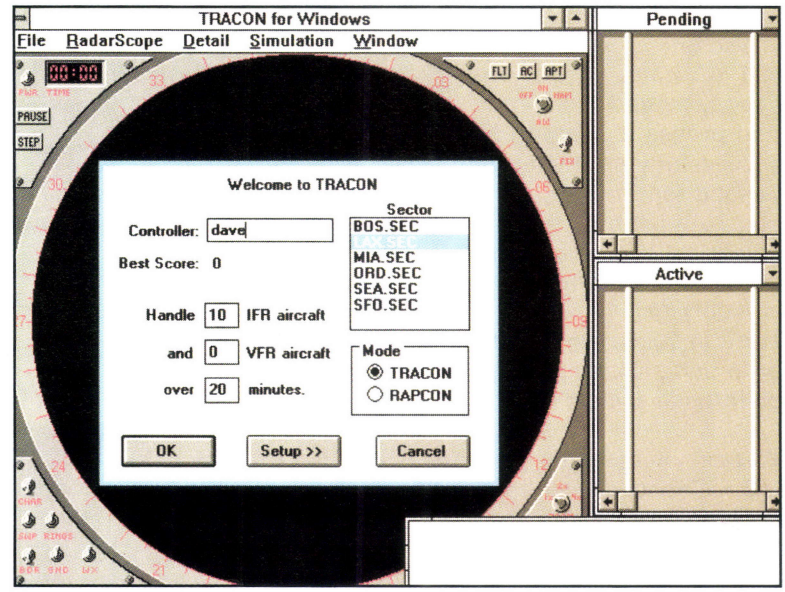
There are six major airports to control, each surrounded by smaller airports. The air traffic is only as heavy as the player wants. Wesson has even added an option to link with Microsoft *Flight Simulator* via modem or direct cable, so the controller can send messages to the *Flight Simulator* pilot or vice versa. When two players are linked together, the human element of air traffic control becomes much more apparent. Even without a second human, the player can experience the tension while trying, sometimes unsuccessfully, to navigate a dozen aircraft in small amounts of airspace.

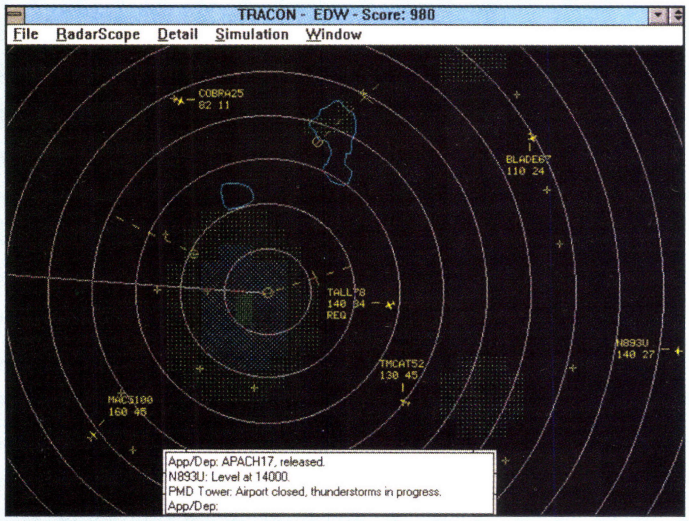
The gamer can play in any weather, from clear to stormy. He decides how skilled the pilots he controls are and how often emergency situations occur. If a pilot is perfect, he does exactly as the controller commands, but, if he's lousy, he'll make plenty of mistakes.

After a time limit is set, the traffic begins to fly in. Some aircraft are departing from the control area, others landing and still more are just crossing the controller's airspace. It is the player's responsibility to make radio contact with each pilot and guide him to his destination. The controller must direct the aircraft so that two planes won't get too close to each other and so that crafts are heading the right direction when handed off to another controller. Aircraft can be anything from large 747s to small, private Cessnas. Each type of plane has different characteristics that must be considered when controlling it. Some have fuel to burn, others must be led to the ground immediately.

This version is much better than the previous *Tracon* programs. The graphics are smoother, the environment more user-friendly and the sound much clearer. The on-screen display is nothing to shout about, but neither is the one used by a real ATC. The entire graphics consist of a radar display and lists of which aircraft are

Wesson International's *Tracon for Windows* is one of the most accurate air traffic control programs ever released.





***Tracon for Windows* allows the player to link up and communicate with the pilot in Microsoft's *Flight Simulator*.**

being controlled and which will need to be controlled shortly. All the voices are digitized and can play through the PC speaker or a Sound Blaster. Though louder and clearer though the Sound Blaster, the voices sound more realistic through the internal speaker because of the static sound produced. Unfortunately, the radio messages are choppy, due to the mixing of different voices.

The game really is outstanding, but it does play to a limited audience. Unless the computerist is interested in behind-the-scenes work at an airport, this game won't be appealing.

Tracon for Windows is one of the most accurate air traffic control programs ever released for home use and, to this date, the best. It is also one of the most difficult. Air traffic control is no easy task, and this simulation proves it. Wesson has successfully combined the various aspects that go into controlling, but, unfortunately, all a controller does is stare at a radar display for hours on end. This game is highly recommended for anyone interested in becoming an air traffic controller or in understanding what real pilots must go through every day.

—David Ethel

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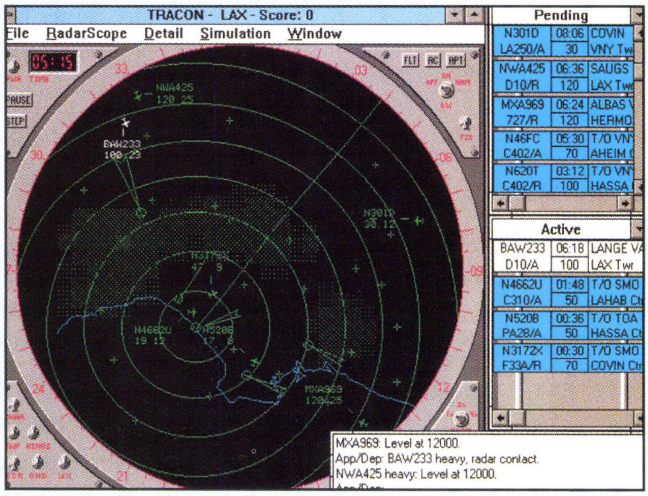
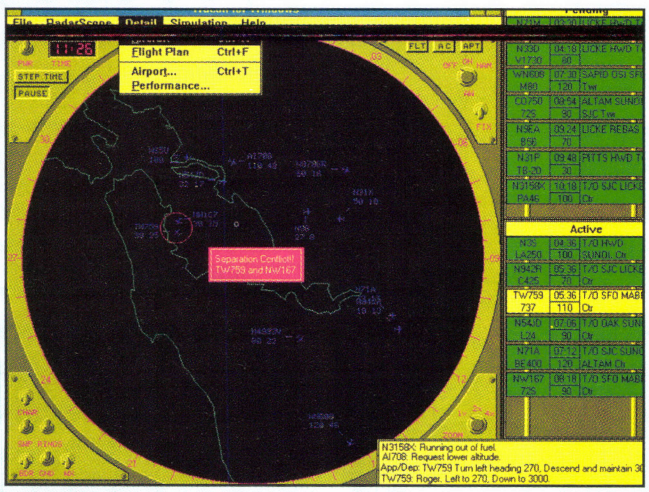




Treasures of the Savage Frontier

SSI

Version: IBM PC ($49.95)

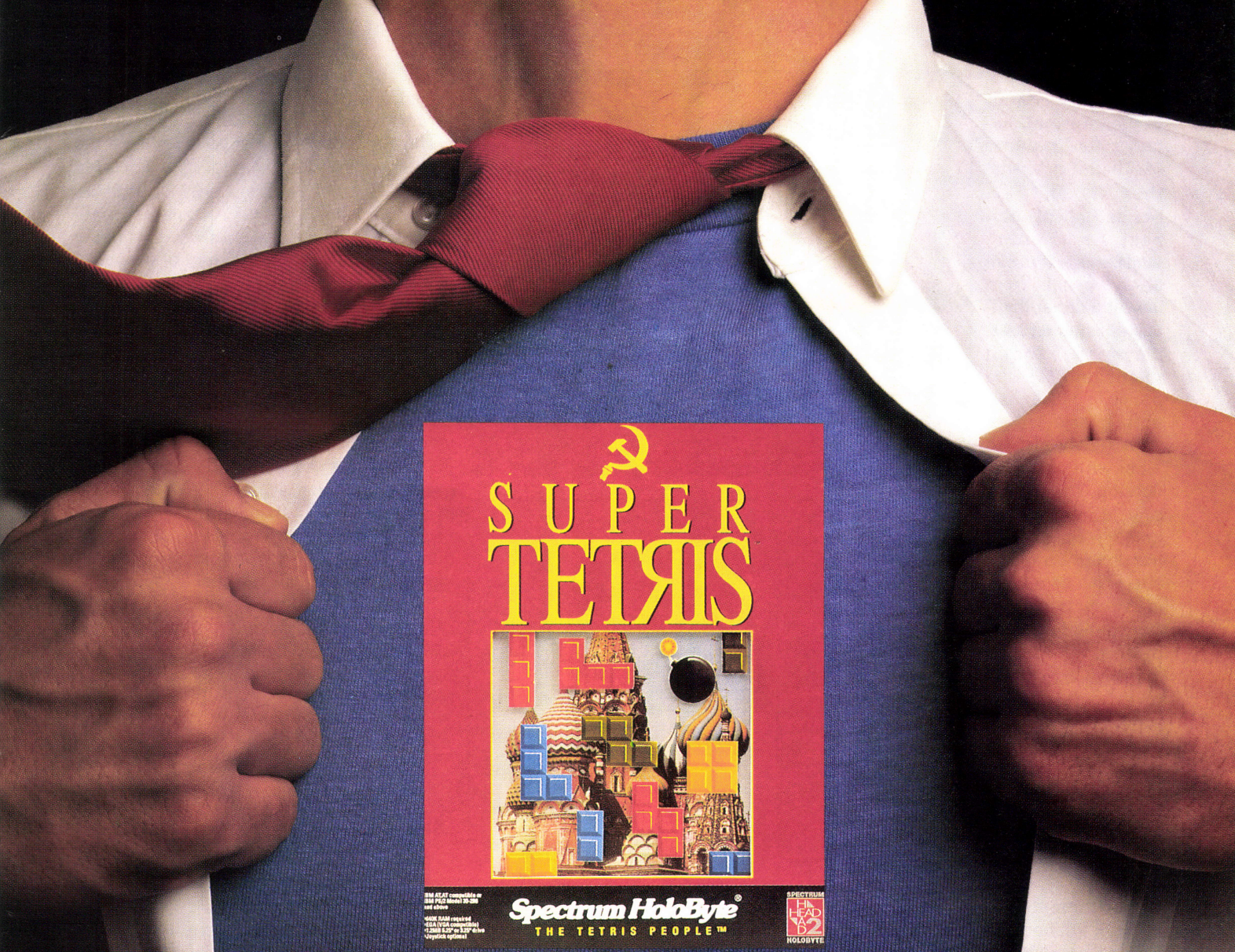
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Gateway to the Savage Frontier was a tough adventure for its characters, who faced armies turned traitor, scores of supercharged undead and some of the meanest walking plants that ever tried to reduce them to mulch; but no sooner did the "Heroes of Ascore" begin to appreciate their accomplishments, than the saved city-states started gearing up for war with one another. The battle-weary heroes must begin to wonder if it's all worth it, as did the designers of *Treasures of the Savage Frontier* while trying to pump renovations into yet another of SSI's "gold box" AD&D simulations.

Player-characters can be transferred from *Gateway from the Savage Frontier* or created for *Treasures*. Newly created adventurers start with enough magical armaments to hold their own with veterans, and, depending on class, experience allows characters to raise the dead, attack twice per round or turn enemy brains to neural pudding. Anyone looking for the high-level juggernauts of *Pools of Darkness* or *The Dark Queen of Krynn*, however, would do well to wait for the next inevitable installment in the *Savage Frontier* saga.

Aminatas, the wizard/comic-relief, returns from *Gateway* to lead characters from one combat mission to the next. Because of the shifting alliances and mass deception that make up the plot, his guidance is necessary to help decipher the story line. However, he is absolutely worthless when the party avoids the linear sequence of events. A wizard powerful enough to magically broadcast his face and voice miles from his hometown should be able to tailor his advice to the situation. But if Aminatas provides no variation, *Treasures* does offer three new features: battlefield reinforcement, romance and weather.

The continent on the verge of civil war, NPCs can't wait to get into battle and often appear from nowhere to boost one or both forces. When reinforcements arrive for the



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adventurers' opponents, play continues as normal, except that players had better pray that they haven't expended all of their best spells. And, while characters can always benefit from any additional damage inflicted on foes, play-testers forgot to account for one possibility: If all characters are killed, their newly arrived allies will continue fighting. This generally doesn't take long, unless the two forces are on opposite sides of a wall, in which case they can spend hundreds of combat rounds running back and forth without ever attacking one another. With *Treasures*' long boot time, having to turn off the computer to restart play makes this doubly annoying.

Not content simply with full-bodiced women gracing the game's box covers, SSI has added romance to *Treasures*. But what's missing is the player's involvement. If the player had options of impressing the NPC with wealth, charisma and the well-timed rescue in combat, this would greatly enhance play. Instead, players are mostly treated to written updates of the communal smiles, hand-holding and passionate kissing when the adventurers make camp. And, in the review game, the NPC male was romanced by no one else than the party's paladin, a character class designated by its total commitment to the mission at hand and its almost nauseating purity.

With weather, as with romance, SSI failed to realize the importance of making it noticeable to players beyond a few perfunctory lines of text or a combat modifier understood by the CPU but not much more. Rain and snow should obscure the screen, and, while asking for fully animated pictures of characters and monsters slipping and falling in their harsh surroundings would be a bit excessive, it wouldn't take an overwhelming amount of programming to have them fall prone occasionally.

The hit-or-miss gimmickry found in *Treasures* is partially understandable. As it neither begins a story line nor features the high-powered thrill of other "gold box" installments, selling it to anyone other than *Gateway* veterans would be a serious challenge. But if SSI wants to create and support different story lines using the same game mechanics, it needs either greater player freedom than choosing which beasts to kill first or gimmicks that successfully distract players from the monotony of identical playing experiences.

—David S. Moskowitz

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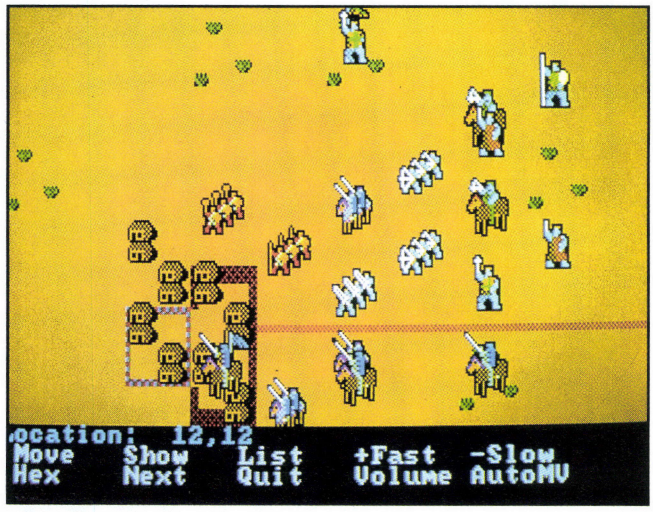


The characters in SSI's *Treasures of the Savage Frontier* face the perils of combat, changing weather conditions and romantic involvement.

Ultima Underworld: The Stygian Abyss

ORIGIN (BLUE SKY PRODUCTIONS: DEVELOPER)
Version: IBM PC ($69.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

When *Dungeon Master* first appeared on the scene a few years back, experienced adventurers reveled in its first-person perspective. Since that time, there have been numerous refinements in this sub-genre, most notably in SSI's *Eye of the Beholder* series. Nothing, however, has prepared ye brave dungeon dwellers for what lies ahead. *Ultima Underworld: The Stygian Abyss* will blow your plate armor away (and regular readers know that this reviewer is not prone to "hype").

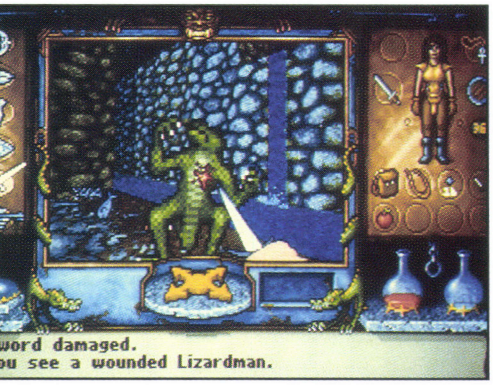
What sets *Stygian* apart from the rest is the depth and texture of the gaming environment. First and foremost, levels are decidedly not level. The standard x/y grid maze, with eight-foot ceilings and square rooms, is dead, regardless of how many varieties of dungeon moss grow on the walls. *Stygian* employs levels that allow 50-foot changes in elevation within the level. Main areas can be cavernous, such

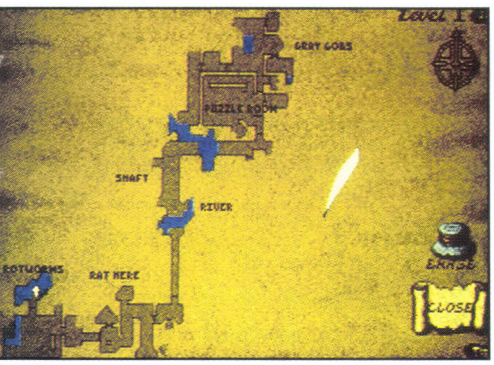
that, standing in the center, one's torch won't illuminate any of the walls.

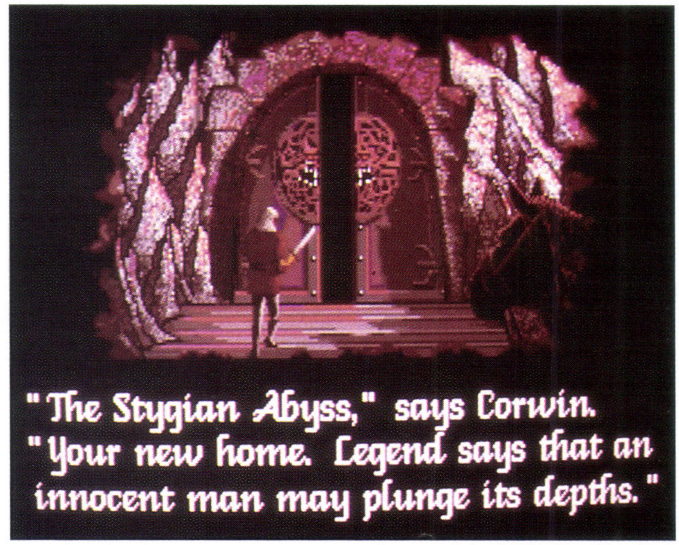
Passageways narrow and widen, and chambers come in all shapes and sizes. Numerous areas can't even be found unless the player musters the courage to run and leap across a chasm, landing precariously on the other side. (Hint: Choose the acrobat skill when creating your character; it is invaluable.) Graphically, the entire effect is very believable, with one minor exception. When creatures are very close at hand (in your face, so to speak), they break down to their individual pixels. It is very similar to close flybys in *Wing Commander*, and, as was the case there, the anomaly is noticeable but does not detract from play value.

Although the keyboard is fully supported, players will enjoy the game to the fullest with a mouse. The center two-thirds of the monitor is the player's view of the world (the lack of peripheral vision being the only detriment to total suspension of disbelief). On the right is the character equip/inventory/statistics panel that became popular in *Ultima V*. Underneath that are two flasks, one representing the character's vitality (hit points), the other holding his manna (magical ability). Centered along the bottom are a compass (more on mapping in a moment) and a message bar. The left side has the command icons for talk, get, use, look, fight and disk-based features. With a mouse, one will rarely have to access the latter, however, as movement and left/right button combinations can do it all from the main screen. Speaking of movement, the mouse cursor changes on-screen to reflect whether one is moving forward, backward or turning while moving in either direction. The further one's cursor is from the center of the screen when the left mouse button is pressed, the faster this movement occurs. So, to perform the feat mentioned above, one should back away from the precipice as far as possible, position the cursor at top dead-center and begin to run. Just before the edge, press the right mouse button to jump (pressing both buttons while not moving will cause one to jump in place). It is also possible to look up and down in increments using the number keys, a handy feature for looking over the edges of cliffs. (Mamma always said "Look before you leap.")

***Ultima Underworld: The Stygian Abyss*, by Origin.**







Mapping an environment such as the one in *Stygian* would be difficult, were it not for an auto-map feature. Invoking this command, one is treated to a beautiful parchment-type screen with a quill pen that can be used to make notes as the player desires. *Stygian* is also a memorable addition to one's collection for its sound quality. In addition to music that accompanies the tone of the action (as in *Wing Commander*), players will also hear the inhabitants of the dungeon slither, shuffle or flap their way into combat. High-quality digitized speech is also used in the introductory sequence. Other changes include a complete revamping of the *Ultima* magic system, this one being based on rune stones, which must be located throughout the abyss (no reagents need be mixed).

Finally, one must applaud the manner in which the combat system integrates fire and movement. It is dynamic, as combat should be, and it forces players to rethink some of their traditional tactics and lead those elusive small targets (vampire bats are the worst). *Ultima Underworld: The Stygian Abyss* is definitely not easy to master, but it is easy to keep coming back to, and that alone makes it worth the price. It is this reviewer's candidate for "Fantasy Game of the Year."

—Ed Dille

continued from page 55

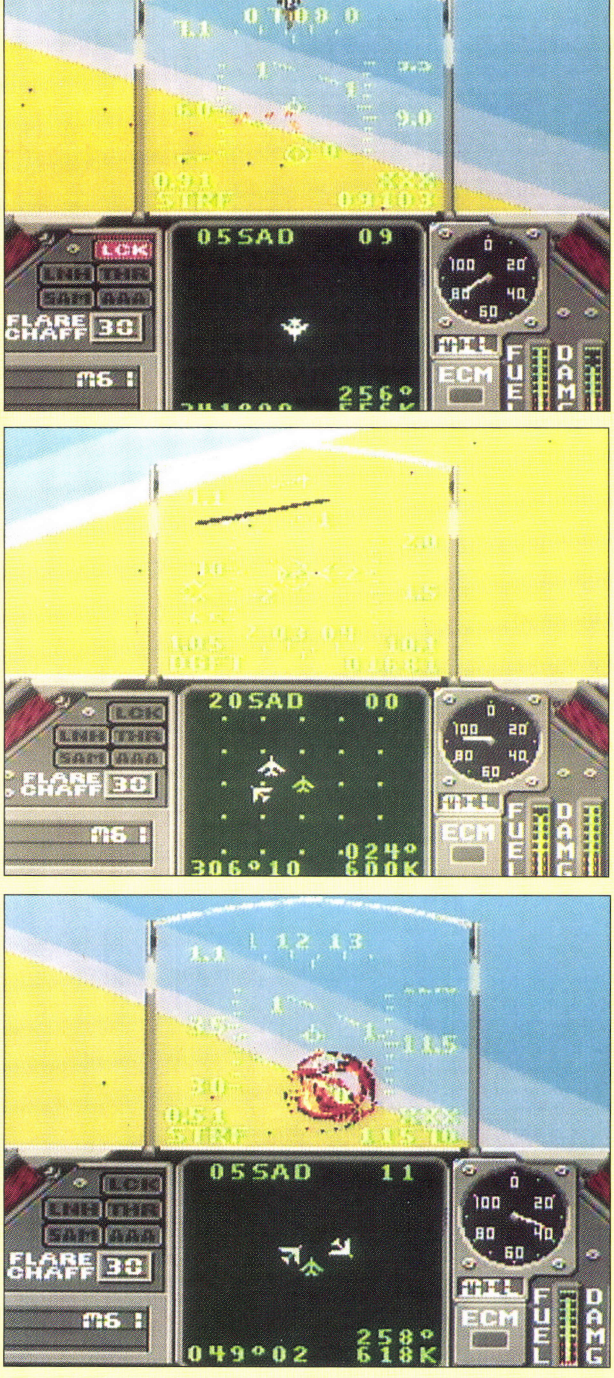
readouts. In addition, a large radar display, which helps you locate and approach the enemy, fills most of the lower part of the screen. The radar shows both your plane and any other planes nearby. By watching the radar, you can more easily judge the direction you're flying and how far you are from the enemy.

In order to fit more readouts onto the screen, the head-up display changes with your flight mode. For example, as you flip between weapons systems, the display switches to the readouts you need for each system. Most important, because different weapons use different targeting systems, when you switch to a new weapon, the special targeting system for that weapon becomes activated.

You can play *Falcon* in several modes, including a training mode that provides options for practicing bombing runs, missile shots, interceptions and more; dogfights, which give you practice with guns and air-to-air missiles, as well as enemy-avoidance techniques; and the mission mode, which tests your mettle with 16 missions, culminating in your destroying a nuclear weapons plant.

But before you take your jet up into the wild blue, you must stock up on equipment. The right choice of missiles can make the difference between heroic victory and flaming defeat. You'll also need to decide on such items as extra fuel tanks and ECM (Electronic Counter Measure) pods, which sense enemy radar but also emit signals that draw the enemy to you.

Once you choose your equipment, you're moved to the runway, from which your jet takes off. Unfortunately, you can do nothing to control your jet until it's in the air. The entire takeoff procedure is handled automatically by your TG-16. This is also true of landings.



TurboGrafx-16 owners can finally play a version of the hit computer flight simulator *Falcon*.

When you're in the air, you have to keep your eyes and radar peeled for enemy interference, including flak, missiles and other fighters. Which you encounter depends upon the current mission and the type of target you're up against. Ground targets, for example, expose you to groundfire that you wouldn't necessarily encounter in a dogfight.

In summary, because the TG-16 version of *Falcon* allows only minimal control over the aircraft, people looking for a full flight simulator won't find it here. Nevertheless, *Falcon* is an engrossing combat game that'll have you hunting down the enemy for months of wartime game play. If the rattle of machine guns and the *whump* of exploding missiles gets your control-pad hand quivering, climb into *Falcon* and reach for the clouds.

—Clayton Walnum

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Legend of the Ghost Lion

KEMCO

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($44.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

The title jungle feline is said to have visited a village where all but one sol-

dier failed to defeat it. The hero soldier threw his spear at the big cat, startling it in such a way that it hightailed it from the village and has not been seen since.

The parents of a village girl named Maria went on a journey to solve the "mystery" of the Ghost Lion and haven't been heard from for several days. Maria visits the village elders, then decides to search for her parents and continue their investigation, even though she's just a kid.

The premise so far sounds like an African setting, as suggested by pyramids seen on the title screen...that is, if you count creatures like goblins, werewolves and pixies (that's right, *killer* pixies) as native to the Dark Continent. Crazy!

Reinforcing this Japanese-produced zaniness, Maria's experience level is labeled as "hope," and her strength and magic power are termed "courage" and "dreams," respectively. As a character says in the game, only humans can have hope and dreams. *Ghost Lion* appears to be competing with a brand of macaroni and cheese for the title of "The Cheesiest," and its "hope, courage, dreams" has a shot as a network newscast sign-off.

So first impressions aren't good, but play the game and you'll find it one of the better titles among *Zelda* clones. Fights between Maria and monsters, though, are handled in the traditional RPG method, in which you select offensive or defensive moves via menus. Luck and your knowledge of the effectiveness of different types of moves against certain monsters determines the outcome.

Fight scenes like this are handled lousily by a lot of RPG titles for videogame systems. They stack layer upon layer of menus and list a confusing array of selections, with more seeming to pop up for every item chosen; things become even messier when your player is faced with multiple enemies.

Not so with *Ghost Lion*. Every command is clear. "Fight," "use" and "run" work the way you'd expect. Granted, things are simplified. Most notably absent are "hit points" and other types of such data, but the fight screens don't look like the back of a baseball card. Also, Maria won't be facing hordes of monsters—just one at a time, or a few more at the most sometimes.

Helping out the preteen against these creatures are ethereal companions she can often find in treasure chests. When a fight situation occurs, any of them may be summoned to battle for Maria or to defend her. More than one companion can be called to fight, if so needed. Among the companions Maria can choose from are the spear-throwing Moja, an elf who's a good bodyguard and Twana, who casts spells.

Legend of the Ghost Lion is a simplified RPG, but it's no easier to finish or any less fun. Beginners and intermediates to this video-gaming category can face the role-playing challenge minus the intimidation. At the same time, gamers who normally don't find RPGs appealing might find themselves feeling otherwise.

—Howard H. Wen

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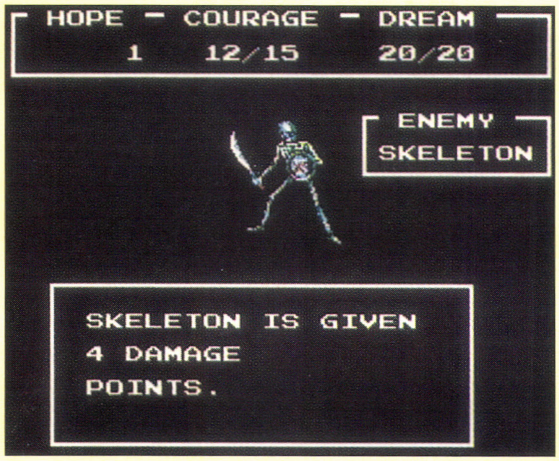

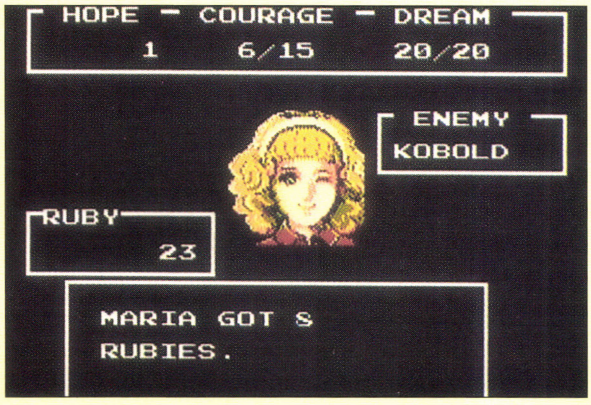

RPG fans will enjoy helping *Legend of the Ghost Lion*'s heroine, Maria, solve the mystery of the phantom feline.

The Last Q's & A's!

BY
THE GAME DOCTOR

Ah, my friends and faithful readers, this is a sad occasion indeed. The Game Doctor, who has been answering the questions of VG&CE's fantastic corps of questioning readers since the very first issue of this magazine, must bid you all a fond farewell. Life, as you know, is an evolutionary process and change is the catalyst of that process.

I will miss you all. Never have I received such a high percentage of thoughtful, intelligent questions as I received during my tenure at VG&CE. The Doc has plied his trade with many magazines since October 1981, when first I donned my traditional game doctor's garb and entered into this most important of professions. There is no task more rewarding than being able to cool the fevered brow of a gamer in doubt or extricating a computerist from the morass of the IBM PC world. Many joysticks still happily in use owe me their continued flexibility, and some even visit me when possible to reminisce about the good old days when one action button was all any controller needed.

Yes, it's been a long time, and your letters have been a constant source of joy and inspiration to me in some of my most uncertain hours. So to all of you—even those who wrote in asking for game hints when I mentioned at least six dozen times that I don't supply them—I bid a most heartfelt farewell. Keep your controllers lubricated, and don't pull out a cartridge while the game is still on, no matter what your friend says will happen!

And, finally, thanks to Andy and Mike, who have made working for VG&CE a genuine pleasure. I'm sure I'll see you all again in another life—everyone knows, after all, that people in the game business have more lives than cats. I'm really looking forward to that.

—The Game Doctor

question

Hello. I've written to you in order to seek your infinite gaming wisdom. Here goes:

One of my favorite aspects of a video game is the music! Yes, I enjoy listening to the tunes of various games, some of which are actually worthy of putting on cassette. For example, the TurboGrafx-16 CD games all have excellent tunes, while the Super NES is also a great step forward in sound technology. I especially love it when a sequel to a game contains some of the same music as its predecessor, and the *Super Mario Bros.* series is a fine example.

I have three questions:

1) On *Super Castlevania IV* for the Super NES, on the Options screen music test, selection "OF" is definitely from the original *Castlevania*. But how about selection "OE"—is it just me or is this a familiar tune from *Castlevania II: Simon's Quest*?

2) Can you name some other examples of theme songs that have appeared in numerous games? Here are some I've collected: the *Double Dragon* title song, the *Dragon Warrior* title song and *Gradius* boss music.

3) Finally, are there famous music composers in Japan who have mastered these musical scores? The composer behind the *Ys* series must be Japan's answer to John Williams or Danny Elfman.

Background music is probably one of the most overlooked aspects of a video game. Please set the record (or the CD) straight!

—Danny Hui
Rock Hill, South Carolina

answer

Good question, Danny. Actually, much of the music that is created for video and computer games is recycled, but the fact is that virtually all development houses have first-rate musicians in house whose job it is to score the action. The same houses all tend to have a sound effects specialist as well—the guy who creates the bings and bongs and nuclear explosions—and the combination of these skills has led to the creation of some of the most sophisticated sound and music ever heard in the electronic-gaming universe.

Even well-known musical stars, like Jan Hammer, the composer of the music heard in *Miami Vice*, have been lured away from the TV studios long enough to score a computer game, and, with the advent of CD technology, look for more and more well-known musicians and even bands to start producing the sounds we play games by.

Think of it as analogous to movies, where, for years after the advent of talkies, the audio in most films was nothing but dialogue. In the early 1930s, visionary musician Max Steiner wrote a complete score for *King Kong*, and movies were never the same. Music was shown capable of enhancing dramatic effects to an unbelievable degree, and the rest, as they say, is history. In all likelihood, the same thing will happen in our hobby.

As to your specific questions, selection "OE" sure sounds like *Simon's Quest* to me. But as to Japanese composers attaining individual fame, that isn't likely to happen under the present set of circumstances. For one thing, Japanese games are mostly constructed by teams, with individual members of that team receiving little or no recognition. It's a carryover from the old days when Atari tried to sell video games because they had "Atari" on the box. To the Doc, that makes about

as much sense as buying an album that doesn't list the performer but has "Atlantic" printed proudly in the corner. The publisher means a lot less than the creator(s), and it's about time the Japanese and American videogame industries figured that out.

One bright spot, however: The Japanese creator of the *Mario Bros.* characters recently got a cover shot on an American magazine! Now if only we could find out who designed and worked on *Space Invaders*, *Pac-Man*, *Galaxian*, etc....

question

I have heard of the AC plug, Power Base Converter and RF switch for the Genesis; what exactly do they do?

—Nathan Dahl
Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin

answer

The AC plug runs from the Genesis into your wall unit, providing the system with power. The Power Base Converter fits into the Genesis' cartridge slot and then receives all Master System games and plays them normally. The RF switch is a radio frequency device that translates the signals from the Genesis into signals that can be interpreted and displayed by your TV. In other words, if you want to see your games, it's a good thing to have!

question

I used to own a Nintendo Entertainment System, but when I traded carts, they got dirty and never worked. Then I bought a new NES and I haven't traded or borrowed games in two years and it works perfectly. My question is, if I buy used games from clubs like Play It Again, will it ruin my NES?

—Gideon Sargeant
Brooklyn, New York

answer

People who consistently buy used video games or deal in used tapes are likely dealing with tapes that have been used excessively. The longer you use a cartridge, the likelier the contact points are to become grungy. There is, however, a solution to this problem, as I have mentioned several times in past columns. Several companies make cleaners that, when applied to a cotton swab or other applicator, can wash that grunge right out of your hair, so to speak. Once cleaned, no matter how old a cartridge may be, it shouldn't cause the system any trouble or problems.

question

I need your help. Recently, I purchased Accolade's *Test Drive II* bundle that included several car disks and scenery disks. Well, to make a long story short, it doesn't work; and when I called the customer service support number listed in the manual, I got no response. So I wrote them a letter and got no response. Either their customer support department is nonexistent or they have changed their address and phone number. Will you please tell me their newest number and/or mailing address?

—Brad Palmer
Hawthorne, Nevada

answer

Of course, we immediately checked out your story, Brad, and here's what we got. The Accolade Customer Support Department (CSD) is alive and well. They answered on the second ring, gave quick explanations on how to most promptly access the information needed and took care of problems in a polite manner. You can call or write to them at:

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It's possible, of course, that Accolade's CS system was temporarily offline when you phoned because of the company moving on April 27. Also, you must call between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Pacific Time, though that should have been no problem for you Brad, living in the same time zone.

In any case, we tried calling half a dozen times over the course of a three-day period and had no trouble.

Well, it's time for the old Doc to head on down to the jacuzzi and soak his tired bones. It's been a blast, gang. Aloha!

Starting next month, *Game Doctor* will be replaced by *Q & A*. Send any questions, comments and corrections to: *Q & A*, VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210.

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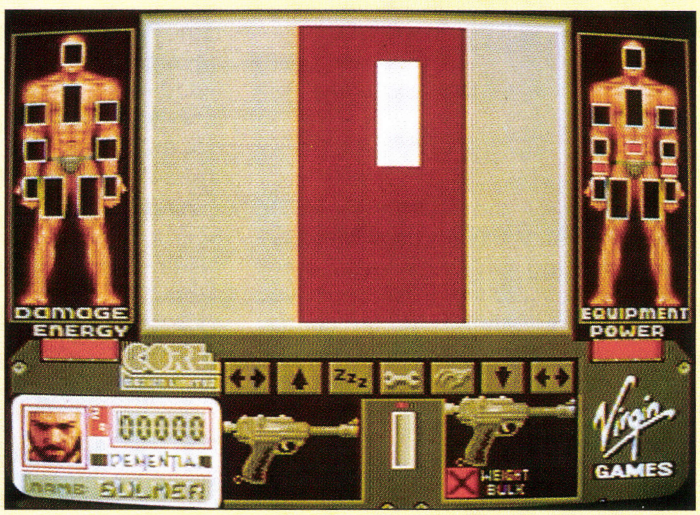
When choosing equipment, keep in mind that most of the smaller items can be found throughout the building during exploration. Don't waste money on these items, such as drinks, refills, chemicals and the psi-enhancing drugs. These things are in abundance on most of the levels. Disruptors, grenades, stun grenades and bombs should be purchased in very limited quantities. Use most of the money to enhance characters' abilities and to buy some of the larger items—but don't forget to get a gun. The backpack computer is almost essential to anyone who wants to carefully map each level. However, it is a heavy item and it uses a great deal of power, so it handicaps the character.

There are 13 different pockets in which the player can store equipment. The size of a pocket is a good measure of how much it holds; they do hold a certain amount of bulk. If items are just randomly placed, it is more difficult to find space for things found during the game. Keep track of the total weight the character is carrying. If it is more than what he or she should be carrying, then the on-screen ego tires quickly. At that point, a drink or a dose of stimulant from the medi-kit will improve the character's energy level.

Sleep is another way to increase the energy level, but sleeping is not the safest thing to do. It must be in a protected spot so that a guard will not stumble over you. One of the best places to sleep is in the elevator on the fifth floor of the building. Few guards enter the elevator, and, on the fifth floor, the guards don't even walk around. If it is not possible or convenient to get back to an elevator, the next safest place to sleep is in a room that has combination locks on all the doors.

One of the best tools that a human character has available is psychic powers or psionics. The best way to destroy all guards in a room is to rush in and use Mind Blast. This is much safer than a bomb, more accurate than a grenade and doesn't set off the alarm like those two other devices.

The trick to psionics is figuring out how they work. There are three areas of psionic powers, each subdivided into three different parts, as thoroughly described in the manual. Common sense is all that is needed to work psionics successfully. For example, a formula to heal a character is something like this: The first area determines the effect on a body (the three parts are: no effect on the body, a micro effect on the body and a macro effect). Since healing affects the whole body, choose the macro effect. The next area is divided into: no positive or negative effect, positive effect and negative effect; healing is a positive effect. The final area determines whether the person using the psionics (the caster) is affected or whether someone



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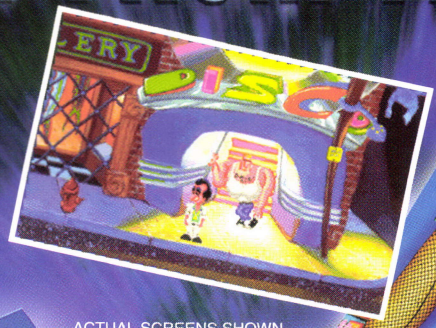

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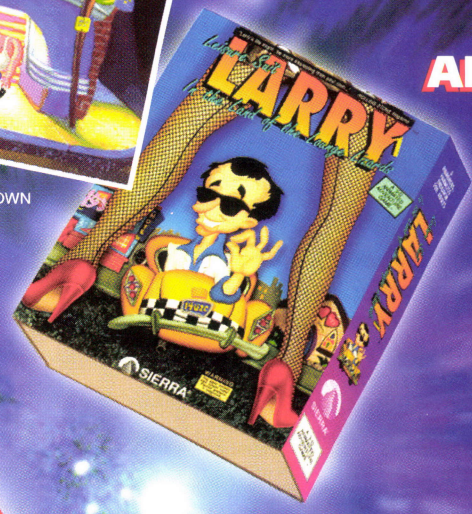

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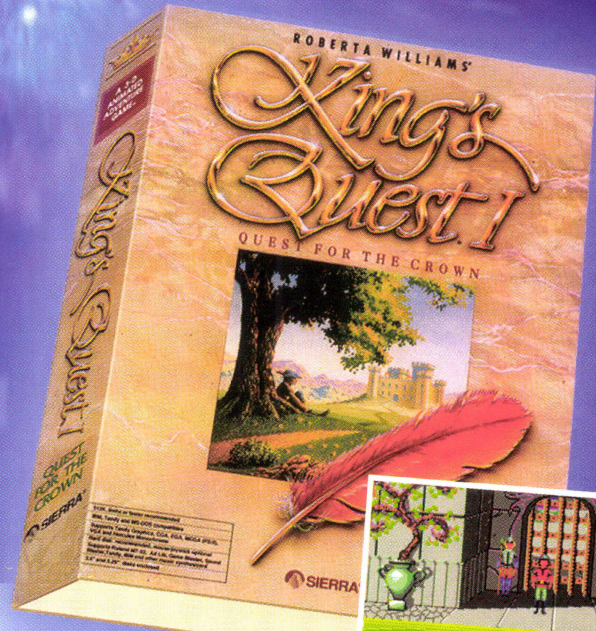

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else is. The specific parts are: neither caster nor others, the caster, and others. The caster is the choice to make for healing. (The guards don't need any help!) These three components, when combined, will help heal any injuries a character has sustained.

The best strategy in *Corporation* is not to rush around, but to take your time. Wait in the doorway and look around before you enter a room. When you need to rest or heal, do that before continuing your exploration.

—John Schnyder

Becoming a Shadow Sorcerer

STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS
Versions: Amiga, IBM PC

Shadow Sorcerer is very different from playing other SSI titles. One difference is the large overhead-view map over which you move and with which you must plan your travels. Another new wrinkle is the band of refugees you must keep in tow.

Although the goal is to get the refugees safely away from the dreaded Draconians, there are many side encounters that will make your task a lot easier, or at least more interesting. Unfortunately, you have little time to both locate these encounters and avoid the Draconians, who are hot on your trail.

The solution is, at first, to concentrate only on finding the encounters and marking their locations. When you are defeated by the Draconians, start the game again, exploring different areas on the map. When you have found the important encounters, you can play the game for real, going directly to the appropriate locations. There are almost three dozen different encounters to be discovered.

Strangely, it's not the Draconians that are your biggest problem, at least not directly. The refugees themselves are an ornery lot to whom you must constantly cater, lest they break away from the main party to travel on their own. (Yeah, these refugees are about as bright as shredded cabbage.)

One thing that keeps the refugees happy is food, so, when you're initially exploring the map, be sure to note the location of food caches. You'll need them. It's especially important that you know exactly where food can be found in the forest areas. Traveling in the forest slows the refugees, so you want to spend as little time as possible there. Keep in mind that the refugees will always obey you when you order them to go to food. In other words, food is a great motivator.

You must know the refugee leaders well if you're to have any hope of dealing with them. They each have a different personality, so they must be handled differently. For example, at least one leader responds unfavorably to threats and violence, while another will obey only when you can intimidate him. As with your exploration, it takes a few false starts with the game before you learn the leaders' quirks.

Never forget that time is precious. Avoid time-wasting activities whenever possible. Because the refugees are slow travelers, you should save your exploring until night, when they camp and sleep. During that time, you can leave them behind and get a little work done. Just don't forget to return on time! Another way to save time is to keep the refugees away from areas that slow their travel, like mountains, swamps and forests. Flipping too often between the map and the tactical display also wastes time.

Of course, while you're exploring and traveling, you'll be set upon by monsters. As you may imagine, combat in *Shadow Sorcerer* takes a little practice to master. Luckily, the game allows you to set up default actions for your party, which they'll use when they enter melee, assuming you've set the auto-combat option. Because handling magic is much trickier than swinging a sword, you might want your fighters to jump directly into battle, but control your magic users and clerics manually. Then, when a battle begins, you can tap the F5 key to get your fighters immediately into action, giving you a little time to choose spells.

Use the keyboard to help your spell casters along, too. Press the F key to select the appropriate character and then the S key to enter the spell-casting mode. This technique stops all the action almost immediately, giving you time to think.

With its great graphics and engrossing game play, *Shadow Sorcerer* will keep you enjoyably busy for many hours of adventuring. Don't get discouraged early in the game by complications, such as the ornery refugees, who are tricky to control. A little practice is all it takes to become a master *Shadow Sorcerer*.

—Clayton Walnum

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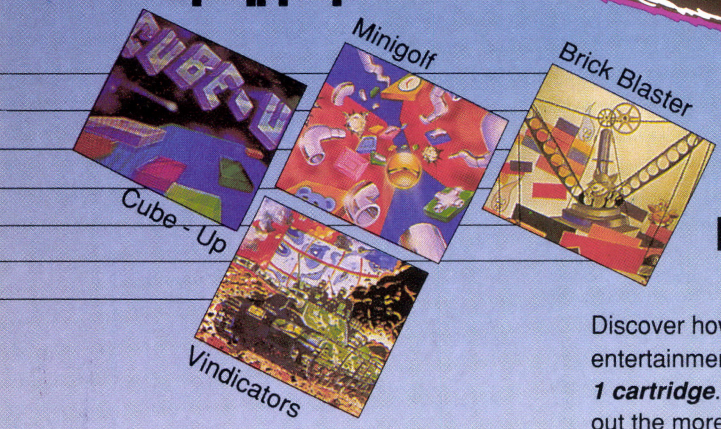

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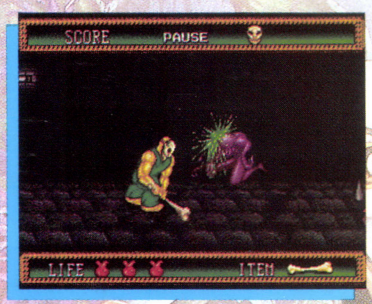
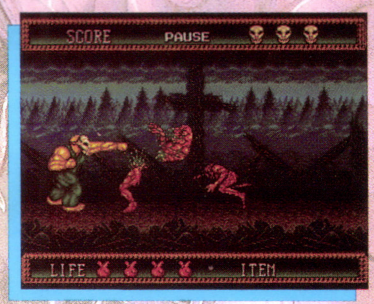


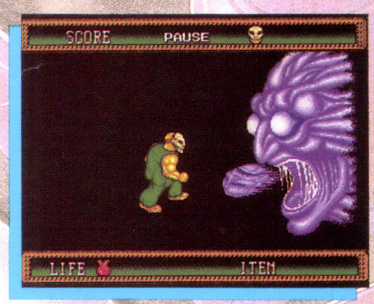
Bone crushing action!



Zealous zombie zonking!

Swinging good time!

Horrific hurls!



Eye popping boss encounters!

Terror comes to the Sega Genesis in **Namco's** stomach turning sequel to the smash hit **Splatterhouse.** That's right, lock your doors. **Splatterhouse 2** is raging. **Rick's** buffed, bad, and back. Ready to trash anything to save his girlfriend **Jennifer.** Love is never pretty.

- Eight levels of horror.
- Eight megabits worth of gross graphics and chilling sounds.
- Gnarly new weapons and bosses

Warning: This game may not be appropriate for younger players.

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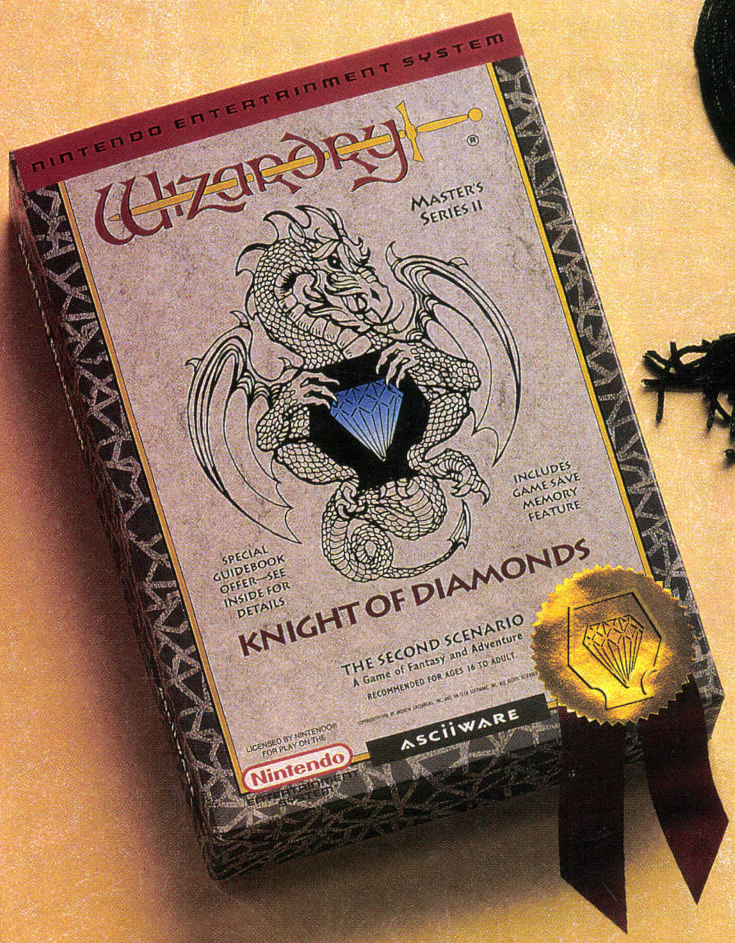

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